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S. PAUL

IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN RESEARCH

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IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN RESEARCH

BY THE

REV. J. R. COHU

RECTOR OF ASTON CLINTON, BUCKS; SOMETIME FELLOW OF JESUS COLLEGE, OXFORD

Author of 'The Old Testament in the Light of Modern Research'; 'The Gospels in the Light of Modern Research'; 'Oremus, or the Place of Prayer in the Modern Religious Life'; 'The Sermon on the Mount'; 'Our Father'; 'The Morning Service'; 'The Ten Commandments.'

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

THIS is a companion volume to the *Old Testament* and *Gospels in the Light of Modern Research*, but it runs on other lines. Perhaps I should strictly have called this book 'S. Paul in the light of Modern Thought.' In my previous works I dealt mainly with the present attitude of the Higher Criticism towards the origin, composition and historical trustworthiness of the books of Holy Scripture. The scope of this work is different. Every topic is still approached from a severely critical standpoint in the full light of recent research, but the main theme is Paul's own message, not questions of literary criticism, although these are at times unavoidable. My one wish and aim is to bring the mind of Paul and the modern mind into vital relation with each other, and, if possible, to help readers to understand and love the Paul whom I myself so deeply love and revere.

Every day convinces me more and more that Paul is the Apostle of the present, still more of the future, and that—with a few important reservations—his solution of the deep problems of life is abreast of the best modern religious thought, often ahead of it. In the words of Matthew Arnold : 'Paul's reign has only begun, and his fundamental ideas, disengaged from the elaborate misconceptions with which ecclesiasticism has overlaid them, will have an influence in the future greater than any which they have yet had.' For us to-day, Paul is essentially *the* Apostle of Christ, His best interpreter, and it is through Paul, if at all, that we are to get 'back to Christ.' In our Bibles, Paul's gospel comes after the other four ; but, in point of time and intrinsic value, it is avowedly the first. A true instinct prompted the Church to add the words, 'the Apostle,' to the title of his Epistles and to no others.

The skeleton-framework of this book is simple. Part I. opens with an appreciation of Paul's true place and influence in the history of Christianity. Several chapters are next devoted to a psychological review of Paul's early life and conversion. This is the key to the man and his work. The

whole man is already there. The drama of his after-life may move on a larger stage, but it is only the natural outcome of these opening scenes. At the end of Part I. reasons are given for accepting the Pauline Epistles in their entirety—the Pastoral letters excepted—as authentic records of the first historical value, while relegating Acts to a secondary place, though useful as supplementary evidence.

Part II. is theological. After explaining why Paul's letters are all but a sealed book to modern readers, the leading ideas of Paul's gospel are stated and examined in their logical order. In each case the object in view is to give a clear definition and exposition of the Pauline terms, and then to translate them into the words and experience of to-day, so as to make Paul's gospel a living message to living men.

It is impossible to approach Paul's writings in this spirit without broaching controversial questions. I have not sought them, neither have I shirked them when forced upon me, though I would fain have let them alone. My aim throughout is constructive, not destructive; positive, not negative. To me the teaching of S. Paul is 'very good.' On the two or three occasions where I may seem to run counter to his earlier letter, I believe I am strictly true to his spirit and merely echo his later and more mature pronouncements. The note in the Appendix on 'The Antinomies of S. Paul' may make my meaning plainer.

Very few read a book of this nature from cover to cover. For the benefit of reviewers and others, a synopsis of Contents and an Index are added, which may prove useful.

Where the authorities consulted are so numerous, it is impossible to do more than give a bare list of the most helpful and suggestive. They are placed in their alphabetical and national order:—Baur, Harnack, Pfleiderer, Schmiedel, Van Manen, Von Soden, Weiss, Weizsäcker, Zahn; Sabatier; Matthew Arnold, Bacon, Bruce, Farrar, Findlay, Knowling, McGiffert.

J. R. COHU.

ASTON CLINTON, *January* 1911.

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attempts to 'kick against God's goads'; (3) Israel's history with its many instances of God 'choosing' or 'hardening' men and nations at His Will; (4) his own Pharisaic belief in fatalism; (5) Is. lxiv. 8: 'We are the clay, Thou our potter'—Hence the five links in Paul's 'gospel of grace,' viz. foreknowledge, predestination, election, justification, glorification. Fortunately, Paul's 'predestination' (1) is that of a God *Who is our Father*; (2) is only for a season; (3) has a good purpose = salvation of all men (Rom. x.-xi.). Even evil is part of God's economy—Paul sacrifices logic to heart. Pp. 273-285

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INTRODUCTORY

CHAPTER I

PAUL'S THEOLOGY IN THE LIGHT OF TO-DAY

THE plan of this book is simple. We have nothing to say of the missionary journeys of S. Paul. We are not even concerned with the historical facts of Paul's life, except in so far as they help us to understand the man and his work, his conversion and his unconscious preparation for the task that lay before him.

In Part I. we shall rapidly trace the various steps that led to Paul's conversion, and then, in Part II., we shall approach his theology, which is the main aim of this work.

This chapter would come more naturally at the beginning of Part II., but we wish to define our attitude to Paul's theology at the outset.

Years ago Renan prophesied: 'S. Paul is now coming to the end of his reign.' To-day the Christian historian reverses his verdict and says: 'Paul's reign has only just begun.'

Not that there ever has been a time within the last 1850 years when Paul has ceased to reign. Harnack is right: 'The history of Christian doctrine might be written as the history of Pauline reactions in the

Church, and thereby all turning-points in Christian history would be marked.' Almost equally true are the words of Havet, the French writer on Pauline theology: 'I do not say, this is the theology of S. Paul; I say, this is theology.'

Yet, in the light of modern thought, we can readily see Renan's meaning. All around us to-day men are asking: 'What is Paul's true place in Christian history? Is his theology a gain, or could we have done better without it?' To these questions many are the answers and strangely varied.

To-day, as in his own generation, not a few leading theologians will have it that Paul was the first to corrupt the simple purity of the Gospel of Christ as we see it in the Sermon on the Mount. Others rush to the opposite pole and call Paul the real founder of Christianity, in open defiance of his own express declarations to the contrary (*e.g.* 2. Cor. iv. 5; 1 Cor. iii. 11).

The one school has only eyes to see the precious saving truths of Paul's theology, his clearly outlined scheme of salvation which has been the power of God for the conversion of the world. It therefore exaggerates Paul's claims even at the expense of Christ.

The other school—sick to death of dogmatic theology with its war of words and heated controversies over insoluble mysteries, rending Christianity asunder—will have none of Pauline or any other theology. In their eyes all theology is a sad degeneration from the simple ethical teaching of Christ. It takes the plain truths of religion, which appeal to all hearts, and turns them into a mystical jargon as bewildering as any scholastic system of the dark ages. 'Back to Christ,' 'Back to

the Gospels,' 'Purge religion of these later mushroom-growths,' is the cry of this school.

Need we rush to either of these extremes, each a half-truth run wild? It is perfectly true that the religion of Christianity is Christ's, while its theology is Paul's, but this does not set up Paul and Christ as rivals. Here, as in their life-work, they stand as Master and servant, and Paul is the very first to own it (1 Cor. iii. 11). Were he with us to-day, he would be the first to exclaim: 'Is Christ divided that one should say, I am of Christ, and another, I of Paul?' (1 Cor. i. 12-13). Without Christ's religion as its basis, Paul's theology would be a castle in the clouds. Without Paul's theology, Christianity would doubtless have conquered the world, but it is an open question whether it would have done so with anything like the same rapidity or success. Christ planted, Paul watered. Never more than to-day was Paul's theology needed.

The whole quarrel between the two schools springs from a failure to grasp the relationship between religion and theology. They are as distinct as soul and body, thought and speech, and, for us men, as inseparable.

The distinction between the two has been so often threshed out that it is like slaying the slain to go over the ground again; but it is a distinction which is so often forgotten that, in a work on Paul's theology, our commonplace remarks may be pardoned.

Religion speaks to the heart, theology to the brain. The one appeals to religious thought, the other to religious feeling. The two are not in opposition, they supplement and complete each other. They stand to each other as mistress and handmaid.

Men complain that theology is the mere dry bones of religion. True, religion may seem warm and living, while theology appears cold and dead. This is simply because it is the nature of feeling to be warm and of thought to be cold. Yet each without the other is lacking, while both together appeal to and satisfy the whole man. God wants us to worship Him with the heart, but with the understanding also.[1] (1 Cor. xiv. 15.)

Religion gives simple expression to such eternal truths as the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of Man, the eternal value of man's soul in God's eyes. It speaks from the heart to the heart, and its tale of a Father's Love awakens in men's hearts an answering echo of love to God and to each other.

Theology takes up these great truths of religion and brings thought to bear upon them. It unfolds their deep and rich meaning by framing them in the words and ideas of the day. It brings them into close and living touch with the highest needs and convictions of men, and so converts them into vital issues of absorbing interest.

For instance, if we are to love God and believe in His Son, Jesus Christ, we must know something of what we mean by God, and why we identify Jesus with the Son of God. Again, it is idle for religion to speak to us of the soul, the Kingdom of God, the forgiveness of sin, the Holy Spirit, eternal life—unless these re-

[1] *Cf.* Canon Barnett: 'In religion three things are needful: form, thought, and emotion. Thought without form does not rouse the emotions. Form without thought is idolatry and fatal to growth. Emotion without thought has no abiding or persistent force. Religion is the thought of a higher than self worked through the emotions into daily life.'

ligious expressions convey some clear and definite ideas to our minds.

Not for one moment do we wish even to suggest that a man, before he can be religious, must be able to explain lucidly and convincingly the exact meaning of all these religious expressions. Far be it from us even to hint at such a conception of religion. We have already said that religion is far more a matter of the heart than of the brain. Now as ever those worship God best who talk least about it. A little child, an unlettered peasant often knows God more truly and effectively than a theologian or a ripe scholar. Indeed, the more simplicity there is in our religion, the more our attitude towards God is like that of a little child, the more acceptable are we in His eyes, for 'of such is the Kingdom of God.'

But man has a heart, a conscience and a brain, and God claims them one and all in His service. He wants us to come to Him not only as moral and emotional, but also as rational beings, for He claims the whole man, body, mind and soul. We shall worship Him none the less, but all the better, because we are truth-seekers, ready to give ourselves and others an answer for the hope that is in us.

Consciously or unconsciously, simply because we are thinking men, we are all theologians. Molière's M. Jourdain was surprised to discover he had been talking prose and using logic all his life without knowing it. So it is with theology. We all make use of it, on wrong lines if not on right ones. The 'man in the street' thinks and thinks deeply about God and man. He feels the pull of the mystery of life and death. He

yearns for sympathetic guidance to help him to read his own thoughts and resolve his own questionings in the language of the ideas he understands, the life he leads, the things he does. Meanwhile, his own mind is a busy workshop of doctrines, and he is constantly shaping and reshaping them in his own fashion.

Now the science of theology does precisely the same thing, only it approaches the whole subject in a methodical way, infinitely more exact, more intolerant of loose statement or careless conjecture. Its one aim is to show us how essentially reasonable religion is, so that, as we said just now, we may 'be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us' (1 Peter iii. 15).

This theology can only do by bringing the great truths of religion into close touch with each other and with our other knowledge. It places these truths side by side with our general knowledge, dovetails them into the rest of our intellectual stock-in-trade, and so makes our knowledge all of one piece, an organic whole. Thus our mind is no longer divided into two distinct compartments: (1) our normal intelligence which will accept nothing that clashes with our idea of truth or our moral sense; (2) a religious brain which passively and unquestioningly accepts any Bible statement which we should be the first to condemn and discredit anywhere outside its pages—*e.g.* the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, or the wholesale massacre of Canaanites, or the sun standing still.

In other words, steeping itself in the spirit and temper of its own age, theology endeavours by a great constructive effort of thought to bring our religious

views into line with the highest and deepest moral and intellectual needs and convictions of its own generation.

What has all this to do with S. Paul? Much every way. To begin with, it explains the statement with which we started: The religion of Christianity is Christ's, its theology Paul's.

But it does much more than this. It gives us the clue to the wave of reaction against Paul's theology through which we are passing just now. Renan's words, 'Paul's reign is now coming to an end,' have found a welcoming echo in many a heart. Not a few around us are exclaiming: 'Away from Paul, back to Christ!' Indeed, if what we have said is true, they are partly right. The widespread feeling of uneasiness under Paul's galling yoke, of which men complain, has much to say in its own justification.

It is not too much to say that Paul himself, were he amongst us now, would be the very first to call for a revision of his own theology in the interests of Paulinism and of religion itself. This is not a paradox, but a truism, a self-evident corollary growing from our definition of religion and theology, if that definition is true.

We defined religion as the simple expression of the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of man, the eternal value of the soul; theology, as the attempt to frame these eternal truths of religion in the living words and ideas of the day. If this is so, it stands to reason that religion never changes, while theology is ever changing.

God's relationship to man never changes. His

attitude to us is and has been always the same. He is our Father, a Father of infinite Love. Even though men knew it not, God was as much man's loving Father when we were pagan savages as now that we are civilised Christians. He is the Father of the Prodigal Son even as He is of the saint. Our Father loved us just as much before His Son's Incarnation and Death as He does now. Christ did not create our Father's love to usward by being made a Man like ourselves and dying for us on the Cross; He only revealed what was there all along, only we should never have grasped it otherwise.

This is what we mean by saying that the truths of religion are eternal truths which never change. Christ has once and for all given us our religion, revealed its eternal truths. All that is needed is to interpret and apply them. This is the work of theology, and it can only do it in the light of the moral and intellectual knowledge of its own day. But, if we believe in Progressive Revelation at all, if we 'doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs, and the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns,' then theology must be constantly changing. It can and must gain in depth and breadth as we ourselves grow in heart-experience and as our knowledge and conceptions of God and His Universe take clearer outline. Year by year, it must modify its too dogmatic assertions, correct its mistakes, even shift its ground.

Dr. Salmon has well expressed this thought: 'Theology is the marriage of a mortal with an immortal, the union of the philosophy of the day with religion. The religion lives on, the philosophy grows

old and dies. When the philosophic element of a religious system becomes antiquated, its explanations, which contented one age, become unsatisfactory to the next, and there ensues what is spoken of as a conflict between religion and science; whereas, in reality, it is only a conflict between the knowledge of one generation and that of the succeeding one.'

The theology of to-day can no more be the theology of Paul or even of sixty years ago, without some revision and adaptation, than the science of to-day is the science of the past. Our whole mental atmosphere has changed, and Paul lives in a whole world of thought with which we are only artificially in touch.

The facts and problems of life are the same for us to-day as in Paul's age. Very rarely can we improve on his solution of them. But our methods of thought are widely different from his. If we are wise, we shall translate Paul's true and deep thoughts into the living language of our experience to-day and so reach the hearts of living men.

This is where, with the best intentions in the world, ecclesiasticism has done Paul, and mankind generally, a vast wrong. It has invested his theological formulæ with a finality and magical power which they do not possess, insisting on their acceptance word for word, as if his words in themselves had some inherent talismanic virtue by which salvation could be won. Flying in the face of Paul's express caution: 'The letter killeth, it is the spirit that giveth life' (*i.e.* hold fast to the spirit and substance of my teaching but recast its form and wording), Churches cling to his old watchwords and formulæ, which have lost their hold on men's minds

and hearts. They resent any the slightest interference with his obsolete terms and modes of thought, which mean little or nothing to us to-day. It is this that has given Pauline theology and all theology a bad name, so that men now thoroughly in earnest will have none of it.

We can no more transplant, *bodily and unchanged*, Paul's theology, which was perfectly adapted to its environment 1850 years ago, into our world to-day, than we can expect a tropical plant to bloom in the open air of our northern latitudes.[1] Here as elsewhere, each age has its own life to live and must work out its own salvation. This it can only do, or at any rate best do, by thinking out its own thoughts, cherishing the ideas and beliefs that are the natural outgrowth of its own time, and incorporating therewith whatever is living and abiding in the inheritance bequeathed to it by the life and thought of the past.

Here for us is the line of life. We want no break, no gap, no snapping of the threads which link us with the past; but we must be allowed so to restate the old truths that they can be understood by the modern man. This is all we plead for. Paul's problems are our problems; his truths are our truths. It is only his phrasing, in nine cases out of ten, that repels and stifles the interest of men to-day. We must translate his wise and true thoughts into terms of modern experience, and men will prick up their ears at once and recognise a live issue that deeply interests and concerns them personally. They will see that Paul is all along

[1] Theology is a living organism, and as such its highest life depends on perfect self-adaptation in response to environment.

dealing with the same root-facts and problems which absorb us to-day.

Once more. Paul has a God-given message for us to-day which we cannot possibly do without. But Paul nowhere claims that, on every question, he has said the last word that is to be said; he lays no claim to finality or infallibility for his theology.[1] He was the very last man to say: 'What is true to me now must be true to all men and eternally true in the form in which I have framed it.' His motto was: 'Prove all things, hold fast that which is good.' He did his work by the aid of the best light and the best means at his disposal; but he was a Jew of 50 A.D., and could not escape from the limitations of his place and time. He made mistakes—*e.g.* in his belief that Christ would return in his own lifetime—and he frankly and constantly corrects his own mistakes as soon as he detects them. Some he never saw, and has left uncorrected. On some questions Paul does not seem to the last to have attained finality, though he was ever working towards it; but he always gives us the clue to the right solution, if only we have the courage to develop his thoughts according to his own principles and carry to its conclusion his own chain of reasoning in symmetrical completeness. No blame to him if the wisdom of his generation is at times the folly of ours, but he would be the first to blame us for that idolatry of his letter which quenches the quickening spirit it enshrines.

Again we say, were Paul alive to-day, he would be the very man to tell us: 'Do not exalt my theology of 1900 years ago into a fetish. Retain all that is of per-

[1] See Appendix, 'Antinomies of S. Paul.'

manent value in it ; discard its perishable local elements. Treasure my "gold, silver and precious stones," but do not garner my "wood, hay and stubble." Hold fast to the principles and substance of my teaching, adapt its form and letter to the needs and convictions of your day. Steep yourselves in the spirit of your own age and let it filter into my theology, so only will my message again become new, fresh and real, a God-message to you. Read me by the light God is pouring on His Bible to-day, not the light of Luther's, Augustine's, or even my own age. Then my gospel will be a real gospel, supplying men with the only clue which gives a meaning and a purpose to a world which, in your day as in mine, would otherwise be without any real significance.'

This was the spirit which animated Paul himself. He preached a living message to living men. He discussed matters of faith with the same frankness and freedom as he discussed other questions of common interest. He was ever ready to 'put new wine into new bottles,' because he was not afraid of God's new light. Rightly has he been called 'the great free-thinker of his day, the brave champion of religious freedom as against the tyranny of ecclesiastical authority.' He shocked good Christians of his day, the Twelve included, by his revolutionary attitude towards the Mosaic law, still more by turning to the Gentiles and refusing to allow them to be circumcised. His conduct was openly denounced as absolutely contrary to, and subversive of, the Christian Faith. 'Wisdom is justified of her children,' and the Faith was none the worse for his boldly courageous act, but greatly the gainer by it.

What made it all the more courageous on Paul's part was that Christ had said of the law that not one jot or tittle of it should pass away till God's world itself came to an end, just as He had told His Apostles: 'Go not into any way of the Gentiles, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.' Yet Paul deliberately 'turned to the Gentiles' and abrogated the Mosaic law. True, he broke the letter of Christ's command, but only that he might be the more loyal to the spirit of his Master. Some one had to stand up and say: 'The letter killeth, it is the spirit that giveth life,' and 'with God there is neither Jew nor Gentile.' S. Paul was the one man to do it and, in so doing, the one man who most truly understood his Master and continued His work.

In the same spirit of reverent freedom let us approach Paul and his theology. He has nothing to fear from a reverent and honest investigation. History has amply vindicated Paul's claims to be the true servant of Christ, the one Apostle who best caught the Spirit of his Lord and ours. We want him most of all to-day. Thoroughly do we endorse Matthew Arnold's true words: 'Paul's fundamental ideas, disengaged from the misconceptions with which men have overlaid them, will have an influence greater in the future than any which they have had yet—an influence proportioned to their correspondence with a number of the deepest and most permanent facts of human nature itself.'

Paul's reign has only just begun in real earnest, and it will last as long as Christianity itself. But Paul, we must remember, is not the founder of Christianity. He openly tells us: 'Other foundation can no man lay than

that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.' All along he makes the religion of Christ the one test by which his own work is to stand or fall (1 Cor. iii. 11 *sqq.*). This is the test men are applying to Paul's theology to-day. To quote Dr. Sanday: 'The fact remains that the Christianity of Christ in its first stage passed through a powerful medium, Paul; and the question is whether that medium left it substantially unchanged, whether it is still what its Founder intended it to be.'

CHAPTER II

S. PAUL—THE MAN AND HIS WORK

'I RECKON that I am not a whit behind the very chiefest Apostles.'[1] So wrote Paul of himself 1850 years ago. They are bold words. How could Paul, 'the least of the Apostles, who am not meet to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of Christ,' put forward such a strong and strange claim? He had none of the essential qualifications of an Apostle, as given in Acts i. 21-22. He had not 'companied with the disciples all the time that Jesus went in and out amongst them, beginning from the baptism of John unto that same day that He was taken up.' The Twelve could truly say that they had been chosen by Christ Himself to be His constant companions, that He had taken immense pains with their instruction and training, that He had sent them out even during His lifetime to do the work of missionaries, and commanded them one and all to carry on His work after His death. What credentials of a like nature had Paul to show in support of his Apostleship? He had never been a

[1] With Pfleiderer and many others we take these words to refer to the original Apostles, under whose authority the Jewish emissaries sheltered themselves. Bacon denies that Paul is here speaking of the Twelve.

personal disciple of Christ, like the Twelve. Had he ever even set eyes on Him? A persecutor of Christians years after Christ's death, all his knowledge of Him after his conversion was at second-hand. How could such a man profess to know Christ and His Gospel as well as the honoured Twelve? How could he possibly place himself on a level with our Lord's chosen companions, who had received their apostolic commission direct from His hands and their instruction from His own lips?

Yet here is Paul, converted to the faith last of all and long after the others, 'the least of them all, as one born out of due time,' placing himself on their level and above it! Is it any wonder that Jewish Christians as a body resented his claims as preposterous? (*Cf.* 2 Cor. xi.; xii. 11; x. 7; xiii. 3.) The Twelve do not seem to have recognised him as their equal either. True, they gave him the right hand of fellowship, they fully acknowledged his divine mission to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, they refrained from adding anything to his message, but there is not a vestige of evidence in Acts or Epistles that he was accepted by them as a full Apostle on a level with themselves. S. Paul's own silence on this point speaks volumes. Had there been any public recognition of his full Apostleship by the Twelve, he must have referred to it, for it would at once have stopped the mouths of his opponents. Would 'certain from James' (Gal. ii. 12), would the Jewish emissaries who sheltered themselves under the authority of the Twelve, have dared to question Paul's title as they openly did, without silent sanction?

His contemporaries denied Paul's claim. History

fully endorses it to-day. Paul's two chief monuments —his own Epistles and the Gentile Church—more than justify the verdict of history. Nineteen hundred years after the events, it is comparatively easy for us to form a truer estimate of Paul's immense contribution to Christianity and the cause of human progress than was possible in his own day.

If Paul was not a personal companion of our Lord, we can now see that this loss was in a way his gain and ours. Precisely because he stands at a farther distance from Christ than the Twelve, he views the Life and Person of our Lord in truer perspective as an organic whole. But there is more than this. Strange as it may sound, the Apostles' knowledge of Christ after the flesh hindered rather than helped their knowledge of Him after the Spirit. They lived too much in the memories of days and hours spent in the company of the human Jesus, and allowed 'earthly things' to obscure 'heavenly things.' S. Paul, and 'S. John' after him, saw this danger. The whole tenor of their teaching is that it is infinitely better to see Christ with the eye of the soul than with the eye of the body. A personal knowledge of the Christ Whom we have not seen, says Paul in so many words, is infinitely better than to have companied with Him all the time He was on earth, or to be able to describe with the accuracy of an eye-witness His looks and every detail of His Ministry. 'Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more.'

Christ's sublime figure is still, of course, at the very centre of Paul's canvas; only, in Paul's picture, earth is

no longer our Lord's home, neither are His acts and life bounded by our lower horizon. Paul is so rapt in the 'glorified' Christ that the 'earthly things' of our Lord's Ministry fall quite into the background. So true is this that many even go so far as to say that Paul was absolutely ignorant of these earthly details. This is a gross exaggeration, but the fact remains that he explains all that our Lord is and does in terms of what He is in Himself as the Man from heaven. He lights up the meaning of the Life, Death, Resurrection and Ascension of our Lord from above and from within, not from outside historical details, and so brings out the hidden significance of these great truths. He knows far less of the *historical* Jesus than the Twelve, yet our own hearts tell us his knowledge of the *real* Christ is infinitely deeper and truer than theirs. His deep conception of the significance of Christ's work, his lofty idea of His Personality, infinitely surpass theirs in intrinsic worth and in the influence they have wielded on the world at large.

Well may Paul ask: 'Am I not an Apostle? Have I not seen the Lord? Are they ministers of Christ? I am more. What are my credentials? "The gospel which I preach is not after man. I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, *but by revelation of Jesus Christ.*"'

Let us examine Paul's claims a little closer. 'Not a whit behind the very chiefest of the Twelve' in his knowledge of Christ, in every other respect Paul stands head and shoulders above them all. Certainly there was not, in their ranks, one man of his creative genius or force of character.

Intellectually, not only did his excellent education in itself give him a decided advantage over the Twelve, but, while they were more or less ordinary men, he was a religious genius of the highest order. It is not too much to say that if the *religion* of Christianity is Christ's, its *theology* is Paul's. His Epistles enshrine for us the experience and thoughts of an original, profound, independent thinker who has stamped his signature, not only on the whole subsequent history of Christianity, but on the general trend of human thought and endeavour.

In character Paul was a born leader of men, a man of force and a man of action far above any of the Apostolic circle. He found Christianity a small Jewish sect, and transformed it into a world-wide religion by sheer force of his thorough-going zeal, clearness of vision and strength of personality. Even before his conversion he was a born missionary, devoting his life to the propagation of his creed and the overthrow of all and any who stood in its way. He could do nothing by halves. 'Thorough' was stamped on every inch of him. Whether as a Pharisee or Christian, he was dominated by a single aim, and he threw the whole weight of his indomitable energy and imperious will into his every act and conviction. What he believed, he believed with his whole heart; what he did, he did with all his might. Not only was his enthusiasm infectious, but he could not rest till he had kindled in other hearts the fire burning in his own soul.

Is it surprising that while the Twelve were confining themselves to the conversion of Palestine and the Jews,

nothing short of the conversion of the whole world would satisfy a Paul? He 'turned to the Gentiles,' preaching Christ from Jerusalem to Rome, and hopes to go on to Spain and beyond it. Here again well may he 'glory': 'I laboured more than they all.'

Paul's divine call. But, lay all the stress we will on Paul's power of brain and force of character, we do not yet hold in our hands the real clue to his strong personality. Rom. vii. shows that Paul was a psychologist of the first rank. No man has ever analysed the inner consciousness with a more penetrating and graphic touch than he in that chapter. He, if any man, knows the secret mainspring of his own strength, the driving power which enables him to 'labour more than they all,' and he attributes it neither to his strength of brain, will nor energy, but to his divine call.

Paul has been called self-centred and conceited. But we do Paul a vast wrong if we suspect, even in thought, that he bases his claim, 'I am not a whit behind the very chiefest Apostles,' on any personal merits of his own. We do not know the man at all, or his creed of 'grace,' if we think him capable of such a thought. He does not think highly of himself, neither does he wish any man to do so (2 Cor. xii. 6). Not often does Paul 'glory' or commend himself. His whole-hearted service of Christ left no room for thought of self or of others' opinion of him. It is only when his detractors try to undermine his influence or sap his power for good with his converts that Paul asserts his apostolic authority or dignity, and, even then, only because it hurts the cause of his Master, Christ. More than this, when once we grasp his own reading of his

life, we are completely disarmed and ashamed of the way in which we have misinterpreted his apparent boasting.

Paul's famous analogy of the 'potter and the clay' (Rom. ix. 21) shows that he regarded himself very much in the light of a passive instrument in God's hands. In a way that we find it hard to grasp, but which a Jew with his idea of prophetic inspiration (*cf.* Jer. xx.) would readily understand, Paul was fully convinced that God had laid His strong hand upon him, that he was, as he calls it, 'apprehended of God.' In other words, God had 'raised' him, 'separated him even from his mother's womb' (Gal. i.) for a special purpose of His own. He had received a 'divine call,' just like Moses and the prophets of old. Resist it he could not, and woe betide him if he vainly tried to 'kick against God's goads.' Whether he liked it or not, an uncontrollable force compelled him to enter on a work from which his natural humility made him shrink. God had mapped out his course for him, and along that path he must walk and no other.

Some one was wanted by God as His instrument and mouthpiece to the Gentiles. No man is necessary to God, and, in Paul's own view, any man would have done as well or better than himself. For some reason inexplicable to Paul, he finds himself chosen. Not only chosen, but fully equipped by God for his task. Paul suggests that his physical weakness stands in the way. God replies: 'My strength is made perfect in weakness.' His 'speech is contemptible.' God again answers as He answered Moses: 'Go, and I will be with thy mouth.' So with his gifts of brain, his force of character, his

spiritual genius, his heart, his everything—for none of these does Paul take the least credit to himself, no cause for self-glory. God, with a purpose of His own in view, has divinely endowed him, shaped him for the work that lies before him, exactly as a potter moulds his clay and 'out of the same lump makes one vessel to honour and another unto dishonour.' All he is and has is God's pure gift. 'Who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?' 'O God, Thy hand was here: and not to me, but to Thine hand alone, ascribe I all' literally and exactly describes Paul's opinion of himself and of his unconscious preparation at God's hand for his work.

Here at last we have the psychological key to Paul's pre-eminence. He is convinced he is God's chosen instrument and mouthpiece. 'Unto me, who am the least of all saints, is this grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of God, and to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery, which from all ages hath been hid in God' (Col. i. 26; *cf.* Eph. iii. 3).

He marvels at his own selection, weak and unworthy as he is, but he knows it to be a fact that a revelation has been made to him, as to no one else since the world's foundation. In the light of this stupendous revelation of universal salvation, he is sure that while other Apostles are preaching a Gospel which is only an exalted Judaism, his is a far larger, deeper, broader, higher message from God Himself. He is the first herald of a glorified world-Messiah for Whom not

only Israel, but the whole world, nay even the spirit-world, has all these ages been preparing, groping after Him. He is confident that his interpretation of the Gospel is *the* true interpretation. God has revealed His Christ *in* Paul (Gal. i. 16; *cf.* 2 Cor. iv. 6).

Therefore Paul knows well enough, though he does not say it in so many words, that the Twelve have much more to learn from him than he of them, in spite of their far greater personal knowledge of the historical Jesus. True, his Christ is still their Christ—but how much more, both in the significance of His Life and Work and Person!

Their Gospel is still the old Jewish creed of a 'promise to Abraham and his seed'—*i.e.* a message merely to Jews by birth, or Jews by adoption as proselytes. His Gospel is to every single child of Adam—*i.e.* to all humanity. Theirs is a Christ who has power on earth to forgive sins, that is, to save men from the evil *consequences* of their misdeeds. His is a Christ who not only delivers from the penalty of sin, but far more from sin's power altogether by rooting it out of men's hearts. They are still preaching a Son of David; he preaches the Man from heaven, pre-existent from all eternity, our Head and Archetype, the source, centre and goal of all creation—Christ the Spirit, Christ the Son of God, the Power of God, the Life-Giver, humanity's Deliverer from sin and death.

We cannot do without the teaching of the Twelve, but still less can we dispense with Paul's larger Gospel. We want the simple, sober, practical, moral and spiritual truths of a James or a Peter, but with them as pioneers Christianity would long have remained a

mere sect of Judaism. They never could have transfigured it into a universal world-wide religion, any more than an Erasmus could have produced a Reformation. Well has it been said: 'The makers of religious history are always such men as Luther and Paul, who in the depths of their souls have had living experience of the mystery of religion, and have gazed with the eagle-eye of inspired genius into the deep things of God.' (*Pfleiderer.*)

Understood in his day by very few, much less simple and popular than the Twelve, Paul none the less left a deep mark on the Christianity of his generation, and in the end essentially influenced the thinking of the world at large. To-day Christianity is simply steeped in Paulinism.

The New Testament itself bears ample witness to his great personality. Paul's figure looms large all through it. Two-thirds of the Acts of the Apostles are almost exclusively devoted to him. In bulk, a third of the New Testament is his own composition, while his signature is deeply stamped on many of its other writings. S. Mark, Luke and Acts are the work of his personal companions. They bear the clearest traces of his influence, though their Paulinism is superficial, because they were written by men too simple to understand him. Hebrews and 1 Peter are steeped in Paul's spirit and teaching. 'S. John' is nothing if not Pauline.[1] Matthew, James and the Apocalypse would

[1] After long hesitation, the present writer is an absolute convert to Prof. Bacon's view that the author of 'S. John' is a pronounced disciple of Paul and carries his teaching one step farther. A close study of the two side by side daily strengthens this conviction.

seem to be the only writings really independent of his influence, and even here it would be easy to find many Pauline touches. If they are counterblasts to Paul's teaching, as some suppose, this in itself concedes our point. Be this as it may, the fact remains that early Christianity was most profoundly affected by the towering personality of S. Paul, *the* Apostle, as the Church calls him in the title it gives to his Epistles and to no others.

One of the greatest spirits of all time, S. Paul is one of the 'immortals.' He is what Carlyle well describes as 'one of those epoch-making master-minds which are so few, because such bounty of Nature and Accident must combine to produce and unfold them.'

Of men of his stamp the temptation is strong to speak in superlatives. But Paul is too great to need such indiscriminate praise, neither would it be true to call him faultless. More than any other man, he has the defects of his qualities. 'If he is a saint,' writes Chrysostom, 'he is also a man.'

We need not go so far as Jowett, who speaks of him as 'a man whose appearance and discourse made an impression of feebleness'; 'out of harmony with life and nature'; 'a confused thinker, uttering himself in broken words and hesitating forms of speech, with no beauty or comeliness of style; so undecided in his Christian belief that he was preaching fourteen years after his conversion a gospel which he, four years later, confessed to have been carnal.'

In this estimate of Paul, Jowett stands alone. We shall see that Paul's are 'broken words,' simply because he writes, as a rule (*e.g. Gal.* and *Cor.*), at white heat,

faster than his secretary can pen his impassioned utterances. His teaching is not always self-consistent, because, from the moment of his conversion to the day of his death, his big brain and heart were never at a standstill, but always discovering some new and deeper truth in the one gospel he consistently preached. Paul was not one of those mediocre men who pride themselves on their monotonous consistency. His views grew and broadened with his growing experience, and he never was afraid of contradicting himself, as pedants define contradiction.

Nevertheless, Paul was not a paragon of all perfection. Very far from that! He was a man of real flesh and blood like ourselves and intensely human. To-day, even as at Lystra, he would indignantly say to all and any who try to exalt him into a little god: 'Sirs, why do ye these things? I am a man of like passions with you.' 'Who is weak, and I am not weak?'

Renan's 'ugly little Jew' is an out-and-out Jew. He has all the daring and energy, the self-reliance and imperious will, the wondrous adaptability and practical common-sense of his splendid race. But he also has its 'heart of fire,' its passionately emotional temperament. Indeed, there is something volcanic about him. Some of his outbursts in *Corinthians* and *Galatians* are like eruptions.

His very vitality, greatness of soul, white-heat enthusiasm pent in a body too weak for it, and his over-finely strung nervous organism, quivering with sensibility, combined to produce an acutely sensitive temperament, ever prone to quick alternations of mood.

Gentle yet stern, calm yet explosive, his soul alternately tossed and torn by fear and hope, love and anger, praise and scorn, Paul is a strange blend of contrasts.

Tender-hearted as a woman, he is apt under provocation to break out in a heat and haste of temper. Humble and self-effacing, he is easily goaded by the calumnies of his detractors into a spirit of almost boastful self-assertion, and his language becomes ironical, irritable, we had almost said vindictive. Intensely subjective, now he is on the heights of exultation, now in the depths of gloom. Ardent and imperious, when his feelings are deeply stirred he cannot wait for a calmer moment; he must give instant vent to his overflowing love, grief or indignation. Thus, in the glow of excited feeling, he impulsively takes up his pen and writes burning and well-deserved words of scathing rebuke to his beloved Corinthian converts. No sooner is the letter despatched than he is on tenter-hooks of suspense to hear in what spirit they have received his Epistle, more than half regretting that he ever sent it.

This is no fancy picture; it is Paul's own portrait drawn by himself in his Epistles, 'letters written, not with fingers and pen and ink, but with his very heart,' letters in which he bares his inmost soul. It is the portrait of a man intensely human, and had he been less of a man, never would he so powerfully have moved the heart of the world.

Our hearts instinctively go out to warm-hearted Paul as to a brother who thoroughly understands us and wants us to understand him. He is a man such as men love, with the strong feelings and language, the

intense love and scorn of a *man*. There is nothing mild or lukewarm about Paul. He draws us to himself with compelling force by his warm heart, his infectious enthusiasm, his big brain, his keen sense of honour, his dignity and courtesy, his fearless independence, his uncompromising scorn and hatred of all that is evil and untrue.

No man is necessary to God, but, at this critical turning-point of Christianity, no man could have served God so well as Paul. God seems to have specially raised him and endowed him with exceptional gifts to evangelise the world and point out the way in which we should walk even to-day. We have seen how deeply impressed Paul was with this conviction of a divine call and mission from what he saw and heard at his conversion. From that moment, as Dr. Stalker truly says, 'Paul gave his whole heart to Christ, and in him Christ went forth to evangelise the world, making use of Paul's hands and feet, his tongue and mind and heart, to do the work which He, in His own bodily presence, had not been permitted by the limits of His mission to accomplish.'

CHAPTER III

PAUL'S DEBT TO PALESTINE, GREECE AND ROME

IN the preceding chapter we have already referred to the deep impression made on Paul by what he saw and heard at his conversion. From that moment, not only was he conscious of a divine call and a special mission, but the words, 'It is hard for thee to kick against the goads,' poured a flood of light upon his past life. For the first time he saw what immense pains God had been taking with him all along so as to shape and equip him for his stupendous task.

How blind he had been! His parentage, his birthplace, his education at Gamaliel's feet, his study of the law, his persecutions, his contact with Christians, his inner struggles—all these had been so many formative influences preparing him for his service of Christ. Yet he saw it not till the 'scales fell from his eyes.' Then, at once, it all flashed upon him as clear as noonday.

In this chapter we shall deal with three of these factors which influenced Paul's life.

It has been well said: 'The City of God is built at the confluence of three civilisations.' Three several lines of historical development converged to a meeting-point when Christ appeared, and each contributed to the spread and success of Christianity—Palestine,

Greece and Rome. The 'fulness of time' had come, producing just that combination of circumstances which made the world ripe for Christ and His message. Through the Jews of the Dispersion, Palestine had spread the knowledge of the one true God all over the civilised world. Greece had provided her universal language as the vehicle of the Gospel message. Rome had made of the whole world one country, under settled government, and with good roads opening out easy avenues of access to every land.

In Paul, Palestine, Greece and Rome also met. Each helped to produce and unfold the great Gentile Apostle.

Paul was at once a Jew, a man of Tarsus and a Roman citizen. We must take each of these factors into account if we would understand the man. Of course, this does not mean that Paul was the mere creature of his environment. Far from being created by their surroundings, it would be far truer to say that great personalities mould their environment to their own ends. At the same time, Paul never could have been the great man he is without the active co-operation of favourable circumstances.

We have, then, to consider the formative influence upon Paul of (*a*) his Jewish birth; (*b*) his residence at Tarsus; (*c*) his Roman citizenship.

(a) *Paul, the Jew.* Paul was a Jew in race, culture, sympathy and faith. 'Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, *an Hebrew of the Hebrews*; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless' (Phil. iii. 5, 6).

In body, mind and heart, from first to last, Paul was nothing if not a Jew. This was out and away the dominant factor in his character. But we shall return to this Jewish influence presently.

(b) *Paul, a man of Tarsus, a Greek city.* 'I am a man of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city.'

Tarsus was the capital of a rich province, a centre of Greek civilisation, and the seat of a most noted university. Situated amid lovely scenery, on the River Cydnus, in a fertile plain between Mount Taurus and the sea, it commanded the southern trade and war routes from Syria to Asia Minor. It had a good harbour, a rich territory, and lines of easy communication lay open in every direction both by land and sea. Thus it was eminently qualified by its very position to be a city of great commercial enterprise and political power.

For centuries after its foundation Tarsus remained an Oriental town, and never quite lost this feature. In the fourth century B.C. it came under Greek rule, while some hundred years before Paul's day it passed into the hands of the Romans.

They saw what a valuable possession they had gained in Tarsus, and diplomatically granted it the privileges of a self-governing city, with the right of duty-free export and import trade. Antony made it his residence for a time, and there he received a visit from Cleopatra.

As may be imagined from its history, the population of Tarsus was a mixture of Orientals, Greeks and Romans, and the licentiousness and luxury of the place were proverbial. In such a commercial and rich centre

a Jewish colony, with a synagogue of their own, was a matter of course.

Though the capital of a Roman province, Tarsus was essentially a Greek city and a centre of Greek education and culture—especially Stoic philosophy. Strabo speaks of the Tarsian university as even surpassing in many ways those of Athens and Alexandria.

It is not easy to estimate the influence of such a gay, busy, intellectual Hellenic city upon Paul the Jew during the first fifteen years of his life. These early associations, however, at the most impressionable period of his existence, could not but leave a deep mark on his character. No race on earth is so adaptive as the Jews. The majority of the Jews of the Dispersion became surprisingly cosmopolitan and liberal-minded under the broadening influence of Græco-Roman culture. Not that they ever forgot their religion or abandoned their nationality. They clung to both all the more tenaciously. At the same time, a Hellenistic Jew living in daily contact with the rich culture of Greek cities, learning the thoughts of many minds, was not the same man as the stay-at-home Palestinian Jew. He could not long continue to view life from the limited standpoint of the Jew of Palestine, whose thoughts were full of Palestine and of Palestine only, and to whom all the rest of the world and its interests were matters of less than no importance.

True, Paul was brought up a Pharisee and amid the prejudices of the 'straitest sect of the Pharisees.' Their attitude towards Gentile thought was one of active hostility rather than indifference or ignorance

But this does not preclude the idea that Paul came under the influence of Greek culture. At Tarsus he certainly acquired his knowledge of Greek, though his imperfect command of it shows that his classical education did not go far. Paul was not schooled in Greek culture when he left Tarsus as a lad.

Most scholars would flatly contradict this statement, and with some reason, if we take Acts as our guide. We shall see that it is not a very safe guide. Certainly we cannot accept the actual words of Paul's speeches as recorded in Acts, yet they fairly represent the gist and spirit of what he may have said. If so, the preacher on Mars' Hill is no narrow Pharisee, but a cosmopolitan in close touch with Greek thought and culture. Lightfoot has also convincingly proved that Paul directly or indirectly drew deeply from the sources of Stoic philosophy, while he borrowed largely from the language of Greek 'mysteries,' as well as from the philosophy of Alexandria.

But neither his quotations nor his Greek philosophy really amount to much. They are superficial and such as might readily have been picked up by anybody living in such an educated city as Tarsus. A man is not a Shakespearean scholar because he quotes 'one touch of nature makes the whole world kin,' nor a Darwinist because he speaks of the 'struggle for existence' and 'survival of the fittest.' Such expressions are in the air.[1]

But there is another important consideration. Even

[1] At Athens, Paul was called σπερμολόγος (*cf.* Dem. xviii. 269) = a picker up and retailer of second-hand scraps of knowledge; a picker up of learning's crumbs.

if it could be proved that Paul was well schooled in Greek learning, he need not have acquired it, and probably did not do so, during the first fifteen years of his life.

He was converted, say, in 33 A.D. In 36 A.D. he visited Jerusalem. Then there is a gap of twelve to fourteen years in Paul's life, of which we know next to nothing, except that he went into the 'regions of Syria and Cilicia' (Gal. i. 18-21). Where was Paul staying, making his headquarters, all this time? Acts xi. gives us a clue, and so does Acts ix. 30. In Acts ix. 30 we are told that at the end of his visit in 36 A.D. to Jerusalem, 'the brethren sent him away from the city, because of the hostility of the Jews, and *sent him to Tarsus*.' In Acts xi.—*i.e.* in 48 A.D. approximately—it is recorded that when Barnabas came to Antioch, and saw the good work done in that city, 'then departed Barnabas *to Tarsus*, for to seek Paul.'

Here is Paul in Tarsus in 36 A.D., and again found there in 48 A.D. What is more intrinsically probable than that he made Tarsus his headquarters all these twelve or fourteen years, and evangelised the neighbouring district of 'Syria and Cilicia' from that base, his old home?

These twelve years, of which we know nothing, were doubtless the most formative epoch of Paul's life. He now knew that the Gentile world was his province. He had known it ever since his conversion. How could he better prepare himself for his great task than by thoroughly familiarising himself with the manner of life and ideas of the men to whom he was sent? He was working as a preacher and missionary all the time, we may

be sure, but we may be equally certain that he was preparing himself for his Apostleship to cultured Greeks and Romans.

We should therefore look to the years 36-47 A.D., and not to the first fifteen years of his life, for the main source of Paul's Greek culture. Doubtless, as we shall see, Paul the lad left Tarsus a pronounced Pharisee. His residence of fifteen years at Tarsus had not broadened him in the least, to all appearance. But they had not been wasted. Cosmopolitan Tarsus had left its impress on young Paul, and the liberal-mindedness of his teacher, Gamaliel, deepened it still more. The Tarsus influence, superficial as it seemed, was there, only dormant, and it asserted itself even before his conversion, paving the way for it better than he knew.[1]

(c) *Paul, the Roman citizen.* According to Acts, Paul was a Roman citizen, 'free-born,' and highly valued this proud distinction. This implies that his family was of good social position and on good terms with the Roman government. Paul also seems to have had 'quite a well-developed sense of the dignity that hedged about the man who could defy the governors of provincial towns with the magic words : "*Civis Romanus sum.*"'

We must not forget that Tarsus, although a Greek city, was the centre of a Roman province and the head-

[1] Tarsus, of course, determined Paul's trade of tent-maker, for the noted Cilician goat-hair made Tarsus the headquarters of this industry. It is strange that, in spite of the marvellously fine scenery of Tarsus, Paul never developed the slightest appreciation for the beauties of Nature. If we are to judge him by his Epistles, the busy life of man appealed to him more.

quarters of a Roman governor. Here a young Paul would get his first insight into Rome's splendid system of government with its admirable order, law and organisation. Even at this early age he must have been deeply impressed by the genius of the Roman Empire, which made all the world one country under one supreme ruler.

Ramsay is probably not far wrong in his suggestion that it was this vast, orderly and splendidly organised Empire which gave Paul his grand conception of a world-wide Kingdom of God. If a mere human power like Rome could thus break down all the narrow barriers of nationality, why should not the vision of an Isaiah be realised and all nations gathered together in one kingdom under Jehovah's universal sway?

Be this as it may, Paul the Jew, born in Tarsus, a Roman citizen, certainly 'started with an outfit for the Gentile Apostleship which no mere Palestinian Jew ever possessed.' Whatever else this young Jew of the Dispersion may have failed to learn from his environment, he knew that there was wisdom, as well as folly, outside Palestine. True, Tarsus, with its Oriental cults, had revealed to Paul the licentiousness of pagan worship and the depth of iniquity into which its votaries could sink. Rom. i. is a vivid picture of the impression it left on him. But, if he left Tarsus more than ever convinced that 'salvation is of the Jews,' and of the Jews only, Greek and Roman Tarsus had also taught him that the Hebrew race had not a monopoly of God's best gifts.

There was, however, one dominant influence at work

from his earliest infancy which threatened to neutralise all the broadening influences of his Western surroundings—his father's home. A Hebrew of the Hebrews [1] by birth, of the straitest sect of the Pharisees, the narrow, intolerant prejudices of a Pharisaic house surrounded his cradle and moulded his early life. A pure-bred Jew, of the noble tribe of Benjamin, bearing the name of royal Saul, and brought up a rigidly scrupulous Pharisee, he was conscious of belonging to a spiritual aristocracy. This would breed in him a feeling akin to contempt for all men born outside the pale of Judaism, and go far to counterbalance the broadening impressions he might receive from a wider knowledge of the world.

If we may accept Paul's own statement in Acts that he was brought up 'after the straitest sect of our religion from my youth,' we can form a very fair idea of his early education.

Intolerant of the ideas and secular culture of other lands,[2] a strict Pharisaic father would shield his son from Gentile influences as subversive of the faith. From infancy the boy must be a true child of the Law and rule his whole life according to its norm. Obedience to it must be to him a second nature, and

[1] Even though Aramaic was his mother-tongue, Paul was none the less a Greek-speaking Jew of the Dispersion ; he would be regarded by Palestinian Jews as a Hellenist and not a Hebrew. Yet he ever insists on calling himself a 'Hebrew of the Hebrews.' Apparently his father had only migrated from Palestine just before his son's birth. (But see Ramsay, *Paul the Traveller*, p. 32, who maintains the opposite view.)

[2] An old Rabbi, asked at what hour Greek literature might be studied, replied : 'Only at an hour belonging neither to the day nor to the night, for Scripture saith (Ps. i. 2) that God's Law is to be a Jew's meditation night and day.'

departure therefrom a moral impossibility. To 'keep the Law' was life's chief end. This was the one aim and *raison-d'être* of such institutions as the family, school and synagogue.

In obedience to Deut. vi. 6-7, a Jewish child's first school was his home, his first teachers his parents. A true Jewish father did not shirk his duty. 'A father,' said Rabbi Salomo, 'may as well bury his son as neglect his instruction in the Law of Moses.' From his parents, the child, as soon as he could speak, learnt to repeat by heart passages of the Law and Psalms. In connection with most of the great historical feasts (*e.g.* the Passover meal), the ceremonial rites were purposely so framed as to lead the child to ask his parents: 'What mean ye by this service?' At the tenderest age boys had to be present in the Temple at the chief festivals. A boy 'who no longer needed his mother' must observe the Feast of Tabernacles. Parents who did not insist on their children's strict observance of the Sabbath and teach them the long list of recognised prayers were regarded as heathenish.

At the age of six a boy was sent to the synagogue school, the 'House of the Book' it was called, because its one text-book was the Old Testament, or rather the Books of Moses, for this was what a Jew commonly understood by 'the Book.' Leviticus formed the chief subject of instruction, as it had to do with the various rites and rules which a good Jew had to know by heart.

Each synagogue school had its upper and lower departments. Everything was learnt by repetition drill. 'Commit nothing to writing' was a maxim strictly

observed in all religious teaching, and, from constant practice, the Jewish memory became phenomenally retentive. The ideal pupil was he who 'lost not a drop from his teacher's cistern.'

A strict Jew's education did not end here, far from it. The knowledge of the Law, begun in the home, carried a stage farther in the synagogue school, must go far beyond this. Such elementary knowledge might do for the 'simple and unlettered,' the 'people of the land,' but if a Jew stopped here, and had never been one of the pupils of the 'wise' (*i.e.* higher scribes or Rabbis), he was looked upon as an ignoramus, an 'empty cistern.' Therefore a true Pharisee devoted years more to an advanced study of the Law in the scribes' colleges or 'houses of study.'

Thus, at the age of fourteen, Paul was sent to Jerusalem by his father for a systematic study of the Law. There he 'sat at the feet of Gamaliel,' one of the great Rabbis, or officially recognised 'doctors of the Law,' who devoted their whole life to its minutest study.

But what was this Law? In our next chapter we shall try to explain what it meant in Paul's day.

CHAPTER IV

THE LAW—ITS HISTORY AND CONTENTS

THE Jews meant by 'the Law' the five books which we still call the Books of Moses, the Pentateuch[1]—*and something more.*

It was universally believed that in this Law was to be found the complete revelation of God's Will. Nothing more was needed. In it Jehovah had made known the perfect way of life. Within its four walls were contained the whole of a man's duties to God and to his neighbour. Whosoever walked with God according to its rules would enjoy perfect peace of soul, the closest communion with God, and be blessed here and to all eternity. God's good man was he who kept the Law, the sinner he who did not.

Indeed, it was the firm conviction of the orthodox Pharisee that if one single Jew, even for one single day, could be absolutely perfect in the keeping of the Law, not offending in one point, then Messiah and His Kingdom would come. The golden age of

[1] The Torah is not always the Pentateuch only. It often includes the whole compass of the Sacred Scriptures (Montefiore, Hibb. Lect. 465). *Cf.* Rom. iii. 19; 1 Cor. xiv. 21, where Paul quotes Psalms and Prophets as declarations of the Law. It denotes primarily the whole of the positive ordinances in the Old Testament.

material and spiritual bliss would be inaugurated, and it would mean salvation for the individual himself and his whole nation. Till then, Messiah could not come.

In a Jew's eyes the Law was divine as no other portion of the Bible was divine. It was the only part of Scripture given by Jehovah Himself in His own Person. During the forty days on Sinai, God delivered it to Moses face to face, and by word of mouth, under such impressive circumstances as to fill him and all the people with lasting awe (*cf.* Heb. xii. 18-21). With the Law the Bible (Old Testament) begins, and with the Law it ends: 'Remember ye the Law of Moses My servant' (Mal. iv. 4).

Thus all Jews regarded the Law as out and away God's divinest gift to His chosen people; it was the nation's chiefest treasure, Israel's glory. As Mr. Montefiore says: 'You cannot take too strictly the word "divine" as applied to the Law. And what does the word "divine" imply? It implies that just as God Himself is perfectly wise and good, so is His Law. Not this injunction or that, but all injunctions. Not the moral laws only without the ritual laws, but all the laws both moral and ritual; all, without exception, are both moral and divine. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," and the precept immediately preceding this injunction, "A garment of two kinds of stuff mingled together shall not come upon thee," are both alike regarded as equally divine.'

The Law looms so large, plays such a vital part in Paul's theology, that we must know all about it if we

would follow him intelligently. Indeed, a firm grasp of the subject is absolutely essential to a right understanding of our Lord's own attitude towards the Law. No apology, therefore, is needed for a detailed examination of its history, contents and influence.

Up to the days of the Captivity, the only Books of Moses in existence were Genesis, a small portion of Exodus, and Deuteronomy, a later prophetic book.

On their return from exile the Jews came back a better people, chastened and purified by the fiery ordeal through which they had passed, full of a deep religious earnestness. Of one fact they were firmly convinced: God had meant to teach them a severe but salutary lesson by their Captivity. They had taken it to heart. What lesson? Their Captivity was God's punishment for their neglect and disobedience of His Law. They know it in their heart of hearts. Into this sin against God they are resolved not to relapse.

Their one desire now is to 'make a fence about the Law,' so that no one can possibly break out of its bounds and go astray. Keenly alive to his personal responsibility for all that he now does or leaves undone, the pious Jew yearns for some definite code of rules to hedge his duties round at every moment of his life and make their performance sure. He longs to act up to every precept explicitly or implicitly contained in God's Law, to obey it punctiliously. But to keep the Law thus strictly, he wants to know exactly what are its directions for every detail of his daily life.

His spiritual pastors and masters, the scribes, supply this need, and not for the first time.

In 621 B.C., to meet a similar want, a new book had

already found its way among the Books of Moses.[1] In support of the reforms of Josiah, Hilkiah the high priest one day announced to Shaphan the scribe that he had found the Book of the Law in the Temple. This was the newly written Book of Deuteronomy. It was publicly read to the assembled people, and Josiah and the Jews were so awed by its words that there and then they made a solemn covenant with God to obey its statutes.

About 440 B.C. the same pious fiction was repeated. All the people were gathered together on the first day of Tisri, at Jerusalem, to hear the 'Book of the Law' read. It took days to read it through, and then the whole community solemnly bound itself to obey it. It was the original books, viz. Genesis, part of Exodus, and the Deuteronomy of 621 B.C., together with some eighty-five chapters, just written by Ezra the scribe, and now added to the body of the Mosaic Law, with the full knowledge and sanction of Nehemiah. More than this, the older books were thoroughly revised and brought into closer harmony with the spirit of the new code.

This new Law, the 'Priestly Code of Holiness' as it is called, became the Magna Charta of Judaism from this day forth. *Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers* fairly represent Ezra's new book. But the fusion of the new

[1] The Hebrews had no idea of what we call 'literary property.' Moses was the Father of all Laws, David of all Psalms, Solomon of all Wisdom. Any new legislator after Moses effaced himself and ascribed all the credit of his new laws to Moses, the source of his legal inspiration. More than this, it was considered not only right but a tribute due to Moses to revise his laws and bring them up to date, so as to give them an undying value. Strange as this may seem to us, it is a high ideal. To call such conscientious work literary forgery would be a gross libel.

material with the old is so complete that there is not one book of the Pentateuch which does not bear clear traces of this dovetailing. For instance, the very first chapter of Genesis is of this late date.

The Priestly Code enters into every possible relation of life. Everything in it is viewed from a purely Church standpoint. The nation itself is transformed into a holy ecclesiastical community. It exists solely for the honour and glory of God, who dwells in the midst of His Chosen People in His Temple at Jerusalem. The high priest now takes the place of the king, while the Jerusalem priests are his peers. Throughout the Code the interests of the Temple, altar and priesthood overshadow all else. An exaggerated value is given to ritual, fasts and feasts, New Moon, Sabbaths, things clean and unclean, food and drink offerings, bodily purifications, sacrifices, tithes, even the cooking pots of the Temple. In Exod. xxv. *sqq.* God is made to furnish Moses by word of mouth with even the least detail of the furniture of His House, even down to the very nails and pins, exactly as in the specifications of an architect nowadays.

In this Code endless minute precepts of propitiation and purification are now prescribed as the only means of satisfying God's requirements. Neglect of the Code's rules, even if wholly unconscious and unintentional, is sin. By far the larger bulk of its Law consists of mere rules of ritual and ceremonial, while the moral element in it seems very small. 'He who gathers sticks on the Sabbath is no less worthy of the gravest punishment, and has committed no less a sin, than he who robs his neighbour or has committed adultery.'

The principles on which this new Code are based are very simple. The Priestly Code practically resolves itself into this one idea: Everything in Israel, all the people, all the land, all the people's goods, their time, their life, everything without exception belonging to Jehovah's Chosen People is God's own, holy, consecrated to Him.[1] But God is too loving to exact His full due. On condition that a portion of each is set apart for Him and for His, He is satisfied. For the sake of this one portion willingly offered to Him, His blessing is upon all the rest.

Thus (*a*) All places in Israel are Jehovah's. But if one spot is strictly marked off as hallowed for His special dwelling-place, the rest of the land is blessed and its safe enjoyment secured to Israel.

(*b*) All time is Jehovah's. But He is satisfied if one day is hallowed to Him in every seven, one Sabbatical year in every seven years, one year more in every seven Sabbatical years, besides certain specified fasts and feasts which He has ordained.

(*c*) All Israelites are priests and hallowed unto the Lord. But He is content if a portion of the holy nation is set apart for Him in the persons of priests and Levites, who must be spotless even physically.

(*d*) All property is Jehovah's. But if the first-fruits of the land and cattle are duly offered to Him, and their lawful dues and tithes to His priests, God is satisfied and the rest is hallowed for Israel's own use.

(*e*) In all cases of sin (*i.e.* violation of the Law) a sinner's life is forfeit to Jehovah. But He is satisfied with a penitent heart, provided it is accompanied by

[1] *i.e.* it is *taboo*.

the sinner's acknowledgment of the forfeiture of his life, in the shape of a sacrificial animal.

The Priestly Code has great virtues as well as great drawbacks. On this point we shall speak more in detail presently, but there is another factor in the Law we must first discuss.

We said that to a Jew the Law meant the five Books of Moses—*and something more.*

Every Israelite regarded the 'written Law' as divine. There was no suspicion in his mind that it had grown up at different times and was the work of at least three widely different periods. He took it at its own valuation, and fully believed that every word of the Pentateuch had been dictated to Moses by God Himself. Even Paul thought so, and therefore speaks of the Law as 'holy, just and good,' as possessing a spiritual character (πνευματικός) by reason of its *divine origin.*[1]

But Moses had not merely given Israel a written Law. Side by side with it there was also an 'oral Law' of Moses. Strange as it may seem to us, all Jews (except the Sadducees) revered this unwritten oral tradition as even superior to the written Scripture. Indeed, it was a common belief that the Covenant was originally founded on the oral word of God, and not on the written Law, because in Exod. xxxiv. 27 it is stated: '*After the tenor of these words* I have made a Covenant with Israel.' In the Talmud we are told that 'Moses received the oral Law direct from God, and delivered it

[1] True, in Gal. iii. 19 Paul says: 'The Law was ordained through *angels* by the hand of a mediator.' Winer says there are 300 interpretations of this passage. Rabbinical doctrine says Moses received the Law, not directly from God, but through the angels.

to Joshua. Joshua delivered it to the elders, and the elders to the prophets, and the prophets to the men of the Great Synagogue.'

This explanation cannot bear the searchlight of criticism, but it well expresses the Jewish view of the sacredness of oral tradition.

In one sense there is truth in the Talmudic statement. Moses was not only Israel's leader, but its supreme judge as Jehovah's representative. To him, as he sat before the 'tent of meeting,' the people would come to 'inquire of God' in matters of difficulty. From his judgment-seat Moses not only settled disputes between man and man, but gave advice and counsel, teaching Israel that their God was a God who hated murder and theft. In this way Moses laid the foundations of the religious and civil laws of Israel, though not nearly to the extent that the Mosaic Books would lead us to infer. Some form of the Ten Commandments may be his, but certainly not in the shape in which we have them now. But what concerns us here is that although Moses was *not* the author of the '*written* Law,' he was unquestionably the founder of that *oral* teaching, or Torah, which preceded and formed the basis of the later codes of the Pentateuch.[1]

Thus Moses was the author neither of the written Law nor of the oral Law as we have it in the Jewish Law. But the Jews firmly believed he was.

[1] *Cf.* Wellhausen: 'Moses was the first to begin the series of oral decisions which were continued after him by the priest.' Also Montefiore: 'The priestly Torah is the one religious institution which can correctly be attributed to Moses. He is the founder of that oral teaching which underlies the Pentateuch.'

The 'oral tradition' of our Lord's day had really arisen somewhat as follows. Times and circumstances had vastly changed since the composition of the Law, while Moses' Law remained ever the same. How, asked the Jews, are new cases, never contemplated in Moses' day, to be met? To go outside the letter of the Law was a positive sin. It was God's own. He had foreseen every contingency. Explicitly or implicitly, He had provided in it for every case that could arise. His Law was a perfect and complete revelation of all His Will and requirements. All that was needed was eyes to see and ears to hear its teaching.

The scribes, as ever, stepped into the breach. By a close and lifelong study of the Law in its minutest details, and in the light of oral traditions handed down since Moses' day, they worked out its application so as to meet beforehand every case that could arise in actual life. This had been going on for generations. Naturally, in course of time, there grew up a vast accumulation of these 'words of the wise,' or oral decisions of the scribes. They were all oral, for their religious scruples did not allow the scribes to commit anything of this sacred nature to writing.

Thus was developed a body of oral tradition. By our Lord's time it had swelled to vast dimensions. The framers of it had not the least intention of departing from the letter of Moses' Law, but in actual fact it turned out otherwise, and they not infrequently 'made the Word of God of none effect by their traditions.'

After the Exile the religious teachers of Israel laid ever more and more stress upon the minutest details of the Law, often approaching it in a spirit that the most

subtle Jesuit casuist might have envied.[1] In its oral tradition decidedly lies the weakest point of the Jewish Law.

We have entered into these dry historical details because they will help us to understand more clearly Christ's and Paul's attitude to the Jewish Law.

We can see at a glance that this Law is not all of one piece or of the same moral worth. It is the outcome of two widely distinct periods, which we may roughly call the prophetic and the pharisaical.

The Decalogue and the Deuteronomic Code are of the prophetic age, the high-water mark of Old Testament religion, and reflect its high moral tone and lofty spiritual teaching. The Priestly Code, with its traditional glosses, is post-exilic, of the era of scribes and Pharisees, and reflects its rigid ecclesiasticism which makes religion largely consist of a punctilious observance of outward ritual acts.

Christ, with His divine intuition, instinctively discriminates between the two. He sets His seal to the moral prophetic laws and still further develops them, while He makes light of the ceremonial laws and cancels the traditional glosses.

Strangely enough, Paul adopts a different method. A Pharisee born and bred, he still looks upon the whole Law as equally divine; not the moral portion of it only, but the ritual enactments as well. In his own personal religious life, as we shall see, he has found the Law a broken reed to lean on, useless for purposes of righteousness. In many of his fellow-Jews he also sees

[1] 'They spent thereon the full force of their hair-splitting and casuistical dialectic' (Montefiore).

that it is developing a commercial religious spirit. They make the observance of the Law a matter of pure calculation, so much work for so much pay.

For these and other reasons Paul wants to do away with the Law altogether, and he hits on a peculiar method of cancelling it. He makes out that it is of no moral or spiritual value whatever in the religious education of mankind, except to convict men of sin and show them how bad they are. This is its only object. Therefore, says he, God intended it only for a season by way of a temporary make-shift till Christ came.

Now we hold no brief for the Law. There is no doubt whatever that in extreme cases it did develop a commercial religious spirit. Some Jews undoubtedly thought that all God required of them was a due performance of the correct ritual sacrifices, the proper observance of fasts, feasts, ablutions and other ceremonial acts and services. It was not a question of how much a man should do for the God Who loved him and blessed him, but how little he could do and yet secure the heavenly reward he sought. Christ's strictures on the Law and His uncompromising denunciation of the official Jewish leaders prove that it was so.

But if we are to judge of the use of a religious institution by the abuse made of it, it will go hard with much in our own Christian religion. Our whole contention is that Paul's wholesale condemnation of the Law is too sweeping and, indeed, unbiblical. This we hope to show in our next chapter.[1]

[1] *Cf.* Appendix, 'Antinomies of S. Paul'; and ch. xxi. *sub fin.*

CHAPTER V

THE LAW—ITS MORAL AND SPIRITUAL VALUE

WE have dealt with the history and contents of the Law; now for its moral and spiritual influence. Paul denies it any, in so many words. Not content with branding it as worthless for righteousness, he deliberately adds that the Law was given 'for the sake (*χάριν*) of transgressions'—*i.e.* merely to convict man of guilt in his own eyes and to provoke the latent power of sin to put forth its whole energy. In other words, Paul's whole contention is: The Law was revealed by God for a good purpose, only it is the exact opposite of what Jews fancy. It is not given to make us good—this is utterly beyond its power—it is given us only to make us see how bad we are. This, says Paul, is not only the effect of the Law, but its one divine purpose, all God meant it to do. The Law, far from ridding us of sin and making us better, has only one single aim, to bring us to the verge of despair which forces us to cry: 'Lord, have mercy on me, a miserable sinner.' Beyond this it cannot go one inch.

But is this true? It is precisely this insistence on the utter impotence of the Law to make men good that makes Paulinism so peculiarly offensive to Jewish eyes. Has Paul made out his case? Judaism maintains that

the Law of itself does enable a man to 'walk with God' all the days of his life; that it *is* God's appointed moral and spiritual guide heavenwards. Paul flatly and emphatically contradicts this plea. Which is right?

Let us try to state the case for and against the Law as impartially as we can.

(A) *Against the Law.*

The case against the Law is easily stated. Its weakest points lie on the surface, so that he who runs can see them.

To begin with, Judaism does not fall into line with our idea of a true religion. Our idea of a religion is that it should work from within outwards. The heart is the mainspring of all our actions; the driving power must be there, and no religion will quicken and leaven our daily life which does not first appeal to the heart. It should, therefore, lay stress upon the spirit rather than the letter of its commands, upon the motive rather than the deed, upon being rather than doing.[1]

Now the Jewish Law seems to do just the very opposite. The bulk of it consists of precepts to be literally obeyed, rites and ceremonies to be punctiliously observed, while its moral and spiritual elements seem infinitesimal. It orders us to do this and refrain from that for the sake of our own weal or woe. We obey

[1] Thus Rom. vii. 7 tells us that one day it dawned upon Paul as a great discovery that the Tenth Commandment forbade coveting—*i.e.* a mere feeling, an indiscernible state of the heart, was condemned as sin. This alone, says Bruce, shows how completely the Pharisaic system had deadened the conscience to any moral evil not on the surface. But does not this beg the question, as we hope to show later in this chapter?

from selfish fear of punishment or hope of reward. Morally and spiritually this compliance does us little or no good. It does not touch our heart or will, and leaves us in character as we were.

Again, the God of the Law may be a just Judge, but He does not appeal to us as a Father, neither do we feel the love of children towards Him.[1] Under the Law, the relationship between God and man becomes a kind of legal contract between master and servant. So much work and so much pay.

In other words, Judaism is avowedly a legal religion, and our modern contention is that all legalism in religion, with its endless inelastic rules, must soon degenerate into a mere hollow routine. It is so easy scrupulously to observe certain prescribed forms and rules, and then to account oneself the special favourite of Heaven. This was precisely Christ's quarrel with the Pharisees of His day. Because they entered the gates of worship, stood before the altar, tithed even the herbs of their gardens, fasted a little, therefore they felt that they had done all that God asked of them, and they claimed their reward.

We naturally ask: How can a religion which makes it so easy for a man to make terms with his conscience and his God according to a fixed scale of outward formalities, regulated by tariff, produce in its votaries

[1] *i.e.* God is regarded as keeping books in which He credits our acts of obedience to the Law in our favour, while He debits our transgressions of it against us. The balance for or against us decides our fate. The controlling conception of God under the Law is that of debtor and creditor, and the inevitable tendency is for the debtor not to regard his creditor with love and affection, but with fear, and to pay Him only so much as one is obliged by the terms of the bond.

anything but formalism, sanctimoniousness and hypocrisy? Is it any wonder that in Judaism heart-religion and true morality receded more and more into the background, as our New Testament clearly proves?

(B) *For the Law.*

But there is another side to the picture. The logic of theory is often at variance with the logic of facts. As a matter of fact, Judaism did *not*, as a rule, produce the distressing moral results we should have expected, but rather the reverse.

It would be idle to deny that in Judaism rightness of life at times gave place to a superficial caricature of it, and heart-worship degenerated into lip-service. Human nature is too frail not to take advantage of a creed which attaches a high value to external observances. No one can be more alive to this danger than were the Jews themselves. The Psalmists living under the Law are for ever raising a loud voice of warning against this spirit of hypocrisy and self-deception. But is it peculiar to Judaism, and are we Christians in a position to cast stones at the Jews?

The Priestly Code of Holiness undoubtedly has its weak points, but this must not blind us to its many virtues.

On the very face of it, its underlying principle of a people wholly consecrated to the glory of God is in itself a great and sublime ideal, and exercised a wondrous influence for good on the nation. *Noblesse oblige.* It may occasionally have fostered a narrow national pride. Englishmen have it too, only we call it patriotism. It also certainly inspired one divine virtue none too common now, an unswerving loyalty to the God of their fathers.

Again, the Law with its many definitions of acts which are hateful in God's eyes, trivial as some of these acts may seem, deepened man's sense of sin, awakened the bad conscience to a sense of its guilt, and preached the need of forgiveness and newness of life. This is no slight stage in the evolution of the soul. Even Paul has to admit this. Even he owns that the Law educates man's moral sense and is 'our schoolmaster leading us unto Christ.'

Once more, the Law brings home to man's heart a conviction of a Father who is no exacting Judge and Taskmaster, for He gladly accepts in full payment far less than is His due. We have seen how strongly the Priestly Code brings out this point.

But we have only been touching the outer fringe of the question at issue. Let us come to closer quarters with the main consideration: What is the moral and spiritual value of the Law?

There may seem to be little real spiritual teaching in the Law, but we forget that the Law was only *one* of the portions of the Bible read every Sabbath day in the synagogue, and 'meditated night and day' in the home. The lofty inspiring words of the Prophets, with their heart-searching moral and spiritual demands, formed equally with the Priestly Code the Israelite's rule of life. This neutralised the evil results one might expect from the formal legalism of the Code.[1] The majority of the Psalmists are post-exilic and lived under the Law, yet they abundantly show that a deep,

[1] *e.g.* on the Day of Atonement, *the* fast of the year, the chosen lesson is Isa. lviii., in which the only true fast is declared to consist *exclusively* in moral well-doing!

inward, spiritual life was part and parcel of the very being of many Jews. Read that exquisite Psalm cxix. and you will soon see that the Law was not a burden, but a positive delight and a real guide heavenwards, ever prompting to a deeper and freer individual piety, a finer sense of that living fellowship with God which is man's highest good, and sufficient for him even when flesh and heart fail.

It is a worse libel still on the Jewish Law to say that moral virtues were of little account in its eyes. As well might one say that Paul cared nothing for morality. Antinomian Christians did say so. Because Paul preached 'faith' as the one thing needful, and openly stated 'all things are lawful unto me,' they claimed him as their prophet, and set at naught every principle of morality in defiance of his warnings. So it is with Judaism. It proclaimed the 'keeping of the Law' to be the one thing needful. True, but only because a Jew knew that, if he truly kept the Law, rightness of life and moral virtues must needs follow as a matter of course—and he was right.

In itself, the Law was 'holy and just and good' and admirably adapted to man's needs at a certain stage in his spiritual evolution. It did not produce merely a crop of sanctimonious hypocrites, but a vast number of saintly lives. We are too easily content to see the Jews of old through the eyes of New Testament writers, and the portrait we form is out of proportion. We do the main body of the Jews a vast wrong when we judge them in the bulk by the standard of that militant and extreme official minority which looms so large in our New Testament pages. There were some very

bad scribes and some very bad Pharisees, just as there are some very bad clergymen and churchmen, but there were a great many scribes and Pharisees, like Paul himself before his conversion, who led excellent and godly lives.

Naturally, the Gospel writers did not feel too kindly disposed towards the murderers of their Lord and the persecutors of their Church, yet their pages constantly reveal the better side of the Jewish religion. We catch glimpses of that large class of quiet religious souls, 'Israelites indeed in whom there is no guile,' represented by Joseph and Mary, Zacharias and Elisabeth, Simeon and Anna—to name only those members of this large group who appear in the first two chapters of S. Luke. We fix our gaze on the Jews whom our Lord denounced, and forget the multitudes who always 'heard Christ gladly,' the simple, receptive souls in whom He ever found responsive hearts and to whom His own heart went out in love. We forget that there were 'scribes' of whom Christ could and did say: 'Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God,' even as there were 'rulers' whom 'Jesus beholding loved.'

Say what Paul will, the Law was a blessing to the Jews and led thousands upon thousands in each generation to righteousness, so that they verily walked with God all the days of their life.

We are ready enough to accept Paul's scathing denunciation of the Law, but we forget that the Twelve were among its champions. They devoutly observed it in every detail, and expected their converts to do so too. 'Thou seest, brother (Paul), how many

thousands of Jews there are which believe, and they are all zealous of the Law.' Yet who will say that the Twelve and their converts were not good and godly men?

The tendency of all reformers is to exaggerate. We have no more right to take *au pied de la lettre* the wholesale denunciation of the Law on the part of Paul, who had turned his back on his old creed, than we can accept without reservation Luther's withering condemnation of Roman Catholicism. Both their pictures are true, but want toning down. A few such strong colours do paint a picture, but the colours do not blend as they should. The values are wrong, and the result is a false impression, a distorted interpretation of the facts.

Let us compare our Lord's estimate of the Law with Paul's. Christ saw that the Law was good, but it was not the best. Its day was more or less past. Yet He saw its good points, or He never would have said: 'The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat; all things, therefore, whatsoever they bid you do, that observe and do.' 'They have Moses and the Prophets, let them hear them.' 'Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law till all be fulfilled.' 'I am come, not to destroy, but to fulfil the Law.'

Our Lord's criticism of the Law was essentially constructive, not destructive; positive, not negative. He had a true sense of continuity and of values. To Him the old was 'very good.' For men's sakes and for its own intrinsic worth He spared it all He could. Therefore He helped men because He did not lose their

confidence. Even when He attacked parts of the Law which He disliked, the hearts of the people told them that His very criticisms and rebukes were inspired by His love of the Law, dear to Him as to themselves. His *new* was their *old*, only freed from traditions and glosses which were corrupting and making it void.

'I am come, not to destroy, but to fulfil the Law.' Yet He does not leave it as He finds it. He 'fulfils' it by bringing in a new law of the spirit which cancels the law of the letter. He distinguishes between its undying moral principles and its transient ceremonial rules. He restates the Decalogue, not by giving us a new set of commandments to be literally obeyed, but by opening up the eternal principles of action which are to guide our heart and conscience, so that we may be a law unto ourselves.

This is Christ's way; now look at Paul's (but see especially chapter xxi. *sub finem*). As we have seen, he abolishes the whole Law with a stroke of the pen; not the ritual laws only, but the moral laws as well! Christ had given an eternal value to the Decalogue, Paul describes it as 'the ministration of death, written and engraven on stones' (2 Cor. iii. 7, R.V.). It is precisely one of the Ten Commandments Paul quotes to illustrate the sin-producing effects of the Law (Rom. vii. 7).

The Law, says Paul, is there not to make us good, it cannot, but to let us see how bad we are. Its only purpose was to make us feel our absolute need of a Saviour from sin and death. It was 'our schoolmaster leading us unto Christ.' Now Christ has come, its work is done. Neither God nor man has any further

use for it, and we must cast it away with its 'beggarly elements.'

Of course, we can now see what Paul meant. He saw all around him Jews and Christians alike making the Law the road to heaven. Jews were doing it altogether, Jewish Christians in part. The Twelve and their converts quite agreed with Paul that the Law in itself could not save them, but they held that Christ *plus* the Law was God's way of salvation.

No! Paul retorts. This is bad logic. It must be either the one or the other. 'If righteousness come by the Law,' even in part, 'then Christ died in vain' (δωρεάν). To Paul, the righteousness God gives us in Christ is absolutely the gift of God, and not in any way man's own achievement. In his technical language, it is of 'grace,' not of the 'works of the Law.' Christ's Death has abolished the Law, because all who are 'in Christ' have the Spirit of Christ indwelling in their hearts, and are now a law unto themselves. They therefore want no Decalogue or any other external rules. The quickening Spirit now does for them what the Law utterly failed to do.

But even Paul was forced to own to himself that his magnificent idealism was not milk for babes. Moral exhortation, very little different from the moral law he condemns, finds a large place in all his letters, side by side with his loftiest assertions of a Christian's freedom from the bondage of sin, flesh and the Law. 'Let him that stole steal no more' is the Eighth Commandment all over again.

We thus see that Paul's conclusions and Christ's are really identical. But our Lord's reading of the Law

appeals to all men, it is so essentially simple and reasonable. Paul's reading of the Law certainly does not appeal to all men, because he approaches the whole question from a peculiar Rabbinical standpoint.[1]

Even an orthodox Jew like Mr. Montefiore can say of Christ's strictures on the Jewish Law: 'Universally, ultimately and religiously the right is on the side of Jesus.' When he comes to Paul, he can only remark: 'The doctrine of "the Law as the strength of sin" seems meaningless.'

[1] As already said, Paul shared the Jewish conviction that the Law (moral and ritual) was one indivisible whole, all alike a divine revelation, and therefore 'holy.' Thus Christ's distinction between moral and ritual laws, which so appeals to us, was not open to Paul. The Law must stand or fall as one whole. His solution is that the Law comes in only as a temporary link between the Promise to Abraham and its fulfilment in Christ. In God's economy it is only there to pave the way for Christ. With Christ's Advent, the Law becomes useless lumber, and is discarded accordingly. According to Paul, the four stages in man's religious evolution are: (1) Sin (=Adam); (2) Promise (Abraham); (3) Law (Moses); (4) Redemption (Christ).

CHAPTER VI

PAUL THE PHARISEE

How many years Paul sat at the feet of Gamaliel studying this Law we do not know.[1] He himself tells us that he was 'taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers,' and this would involve a long course of study. At any rate, he goes on to speak of himself as 'zealous towards God,' and 'touching the righteousness which was in the Law, I was blameless.'

Paul's was one of those intense natures which never do anything by halves. From childhood he had been deeply impressed with the conviction that the fear and favour of God is not only 'the beginning of wisdom,' but the one crown and prize of life. How was this prize to be won? The answer of those who sat in Moses' seat was ever one and the same: Keep the Law. If this was the way to the goal, he meant to tread it. If scrupulous adherence to the Law could work righteousness, he meant to be righteous. Were others scrupulous? He would be ten times more so. 'I profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in

[1] Apparently he was not in Jerusalem at the time of our Lord's visit to the Holy City, but he may have been only temporarily absent. At any rate, we find him there again soon after our Lord's death, for he took an active part in the martyrdom of Stephen. He would then be between thirty and forty.

mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.'

If the thing could be done, Paul meant to be the man to do it. With all the indomitable energy of his strong character, he threw himself heart and soul into the work. Even then he could honestly say: 'This one thing I do, I press toward the mark of the high calling of God.' In his feverish, though high-minded anxiety to do all that was commanded and leave no duty undone, Paul at this period would be one of the tell-me-something-more-to-do-and-I-will-do-it Pharisees.

Yet, try as he would, Paul the God-fearing Pharisee had to own that he could not achieve the righteousness which is in the Law, to which he aspired with his whole heart. Strive as he might, the goal towards which he pressed ever lured him on, like a will-o'-the-wisp, and was as elusive. Rom. vii. *7 sqq.* gives us a graphic sketch of his own bitter conflict and experience at this stage of his Pharisaic life, and over it all is written the one word: Failure. The more scrupulously he made the Law his guide, the more conscious did he become of his own shortcomings. Indeed, the Law merely provoked the sinful desires of the flesh to keener activity, and brought more painfully to consciousness the sense of guilt. The peace of soul for which he yearned seemed less and less within his reach each day he lived.

The fault must be in himself, of this he was positive, for the Law was 'holy and just and good'—God's one way to righteousness. On this point he had not a shadow of a doubt. Yet the fact remained: this righteousness was not his.

At this period of his life Paul presents an exact parallel to that sincere and attractive youth who came to Jesus with the heart-broken cry: 'Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?' We know how Jesus, looking on that youth, 'loved him,' and He would have loved Paul still more at this time. Far more honestly still could Paul say: 'All the commandments of the Law have I kept from my youth up.'

Why, then, did all this sincere, heart-felt, thorough-going observance of the Law prove so unsatisfying? Why did it bring him no hope, no help, no enlightenment, no peace? He wrestled manfully with God in His Law, saying: 'I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me,' and the only answer he got savoured of a curse.

'What lack I yet?' he asked. Perhaps he was not zealous enough. But what more could he do? There was still one way left untried in which he could show his consuming zeal for God. He could vindicate the honour of God by stamping out those Nazarene heretics who blasphemed His Holy Name in speaking lightly of His Temple and His Law. This was an obligation laid by God Himself upon all pious Jews; for Paul it now became a supreme duty. He would stamp out these accursed Christians, Jews who were renegades from the faith of their fathers, setting at naught the Law of Moses, 'the worshippers of the Hung.' 'Cursed is he that hangeth on a tree,' yea, 'accursed of God,' says Deuteronomy, yet these Nazarenes had the blasphemous audacity to assert that their crucified Jesus was the Jews' Messiah!

Here, surely, was God's hand clearly pointing him to His work. He would be the chief of persecutors of these heretics. This splendid act of service to God would more than atone for his shortcomings and past failures. Instantly Paul threw himself whole-heartedly into the work, and with a frenzy of righteous hatred of these enemies of God and His Law. 'I both shut up many of the saints in prisons. When they were put to death, I gave my vote against them. And punishing them ofttimes in all the synagogues, I strove to make them blaspheme. Being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto foreign cities.'

All the while God was leading him all unconsciously by this strange road to his appointed goal. God's 'goads,' against which he vainly tried to kick, were urging Paul Christward, and he knew it not. He had never seen Christ; his persecuting zeal now brought him into close touch with Christ's 'living Epistles,' the men and women who had unreservedly surrendered themselves to His influence and reflected His likeness in themselves. In and through these, Christ first revealed Himself to Paul. Read in this light, Paul's later words are deeply significant: 'Ye are manifestly declared to be the Epistle of Christ, *known and read of all men*, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in the fleshy tables of the heart' (2 Cor. iii. 3).

Paul's heart was already full of questionings when he entered on his work of persecution, deeply conscious of personal failure, and his conscience oppressed with a conviction of guilt. This only added another stimulus to his persecuting zeal. Deut. xiii.—with its express

divine command to pursue, stone and kill all and any, even of one's own family, who enticed others to serve other gods, and to ferret them out of even the remotest cities—was God's own hand pointing him to his work. He would stamp out these heretics, and achieve his righteousness by this meritorious act of service to God.

Here again he ignominiously failed. He set out to curse the Church of Christ, and God made him bless it altogether. All the more did 'the Word of God grow and multiply exceedingly, for they that were scattered went everywhere preaching the Word, and God was with them.' He started for Damascus a confirmed Pharisee and Christ's chief persecutor ; he entered it a converted Christian and Christ's chosen Apostle.

But the story of Paul's persecuting experiences and conversion must form the subject of our next chapter.

CHAPTER VII

PAUL'S CONVERSION

A PURELY psychological explanation of Paul's conversion must ever remain unsatisfactory, yet it forms no unimportant clue to the solution of this great problem. Indeed, the suggestion comes from Paul himself. We have already seen that he was convinced he had been specially raised by God, 'separated from his mother's womb,' for a distinct purpose. There is more than this. The words, 'It is hard for thee to kick against the goads,' are full of a deep significance, and indirectly pour a flood of light upon this difficult question. They more than hint at Paul's own conviction that God led him to Christ by a way that was not of his own choosing. At the moment of his conversion the Apostle clearly saw, in the experiences of his early career, the hand of Providence guiding and moulding him for God's own purpose, though he knew it not at the time.[1]

Miraculous, in the ordinary sense of the word, Paul's conversion will remain to the end of time, for there is an element in it which baffles our analysis. None the less, there is nothing of the nature of magic about it. It was not the psychologically inconceivable, sudden,

[1] There is a dash of Oriental fatalism in Paul; *cf.* 'the potter and the clay' (Rom. ix. 15 *sqq.*).

abrupt; unheralded event that Paul pictured it to himself. *God's Hand was there*, but all unconsciously Paul himself had paved the way for it. It was the consummation of a process long since begun, though nothing short of the vision of the risen Christ could have precipitated and produced the crisis in Paul's life.

Paul was not, however, as he fancied, such a totally different person the moment after his conversion from the Paul just before his conversion. It is exactly the same Paul, only a new influence has entered into his life—Christ. With this new Christ-factor he now faces everything from a totally different standpoint, and, though his mind and will and emotions remain the same, everything has to be recast in a new combination accordingly. He now sees that the old values were wrong.

In conversion, precisely as in inspiration, God works upon us in a perfectly natural way. He never overrides a man's individuality. He treats us as moral agents, not as puppets. Were He to lay His finger on our wills and compel us to be good and do right by a magical act of His own, the goodness, such as it was, would be His own, not ours, and bereft of all moral value.

A mystery all conversion is, but there is nothing abnormal in the result produced, placing it out of all connection with the man's previous experiences and thoughts. All his previous life enters into what he now becomes, and the result could not have been produced without it.

True, but there is something more. A mysterious

and new factor, an x quantity comes in somewhere. We will call it God's Holy Spirit, and we cannot leave it out of our reckoning.

> 'God . . . soul . . . the only facts for me.
> Prove them facts? That they o'erpass my power of proving
> Proves them such.'—(R. BROWNING.)

This Holy Spirit of God, Love Divine, works upon our spirit and influences it, raising us above ourselves and evoking dormant virtues in us the existence of which we never suspected. How? Even as my spirit works on yours and yours on mine, only a thousandfold more so. 'Thoughts come into our minds through avenues we wot not' (*cf.* S. John iii. 8). But, mysterious as are its workings, there is nothing magical about the operations of God's Holy Spirit. God never forces Himself upon a man's soul and makes it succumb to an alien force, though He brings every influence to bear upon us short of that. He reveals Himself to us in all His Love, and shows us the beauty of holiness. He shows us that He is seeking our best good, and invites, persuades us to join with Him in seeking it—but only *if we will.* 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; *if any man hear My voice, and open the door*, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.' But the man must open the heart-door.[1] It opens from inside, and no one but he can raise the latch. God certainly will not burst it open.

So when we speak of a psychological explanation of Paul's conversion, we do not wish to be misunderstood.

[1] This is well brought out in Holman Hunt's famous picture, 'The Light of the World,' in which the door has *no handle outside.*

The 'supernatural' factor—may we so call it for the moment?—is there. It is beyond our ken, but far be it from us to ignore it, for it is the most important factor of all.

What were the formative influences at work on Paul in his pre-conversion days, shaping him for the 'revelation of Christ in him,' and for his after-work? What were the 'goads' keeping him, in spite of himself, to the path along which he was to travel, goads against which he lashed out blindly like a restive ox? We have already hinted at some of them. The broadening Tarsus-influence of his early days, his education at the feet of liberal-minded Gamaliel, his unsatisfying Pharisaism, his keen sense of failure to achieve his own righteousness in and by the Law—all these had been of God's ordering.

One more prick of the sharp steel-pointed goad was still needed, and it was calculated to make Paul kick harder than ever before.

As a persecutor, he was now to enter on the last lap of the course leading him straight to the goal. The nervous strain of that last lap is always the most trying. The previous struggle that had long been going on in his heart was bad enough, but worse was still to come. Behind him lay hopeless failure. All his scrupulous 'keeping of the Law' had brought him, not peace, but a sword piercing through his very soul. He had yet to feel the tortures of suppressed doubts and the gnawing of secret remorse—doubts and remorse, even while believing fully that his faith was based on an unshaken and unshakable foundation, and verily thinking in his heart that he was doing God service.

At about the age of thirty, Paul the persecutor is for the first time brought into close touch with Christians. The Christian Church was now some three years old. Till then there had been little or no friction between Jews and Christians. Why should there be? Jewish Christians lived and worshipped exactly like other Jews, except that they regarded Jesus as the Messiah. In all other respects they were harmless people and most loyal to the Law of Moses. They worshipped regularly in the Temple, observed the stated hours of prayer, abstained from unclean meats, religiously kept the Jewish feasts and fasts, attended the synagogue every Sabbath day, approved of Jewish vows, circumcised their sons, and were 'devout according to the Law in all things.' True, they also met in private for worship on the first day of the week and were 'constant in the breaking of bread,' two new institutions utterly unknown to orthodox Jews. But in every other particular they were in full communion with the Jewish Church and led simple, exemplary lives.

Therefore Christians at the outset were eyed by the Pharisees with no disfavour, so long as they did not openly proselytise or create a disturbance of the peace. After some three years, however, Christianity entered on a new phase which totally altered the whole complexion of things. The new movement is intimately associated, in Acts, with the name of Stephen. If we may trust Luke's report, Stephen may be regarded as the pioneer Apostle of universal Christianity. Indeed, Basil of Seleucia not inaptly calls him 'Paul's schoolmaster.'

Stephen was an educated and broad-minded Hellenist

Christian, 'full of faith and power.'[1] He was the first to grasp the fact that the existing unity of Christianity with Judaism could not possibly continue. To graft the Christian Church on to the Jewish was a stultification of the essential principles of the Gospel of Christ, 'putting new wine into old bottles,' 'a new patch on an old garment.' The New Law of the Spirit had cancelled the old law of the letter. More than this, 'Christ died for our sins' was a fundamental doctrine of the early Church.[2] Stephen saw that this in itself cut across all hope of union between the two Churches. Righteousness, said Judaism, is through the Law, and the Law only,—God's one way of salvation. Not so, retorted Christianity; Christ is God's way of salvation, and the Law comes a long way after. Thus the two

[1] *Cf.* Acts vi. 5: 'A man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost'—*i.e.* his faith, spiritual power and boldness of speech and action were so exceptional that nothing but the *permanent* indwelling of the Spirit of God could account for it. Following the Jewish view of inspiration, the Apostolic Church (*except S. Paul*) seems only to have recognised the presence of the Spirit in the rank and file of Christians as an occasional occurrence. It was manifested in them periodically, on striking occasions when they exercised the 'gifts' of the Spirit—not at other times. Only in the case of exceptional Christians was this spiritual exaltation *habitual*, and they were spoken of as 'filled with the Holy Spirit'—*e.g.* Stephen, Barnabas, Paul. Paul's idea that the Spirit is the active *ever-present* power in the ordinary Christian life seems not to have been prevalent. At least this is the impression given by Acts; but, if we are to believe Harnack, Luke had peculiar views about the Spirit and spiritual gifts (Harnack, *Acts of the Apostles*, xxxix; *cf.* p. 133).

[2] Among the few things which he had received from Apostolic tradition, Paul expressly mentions this: 'I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures' (1 Cor. xv. 3). *Cf.* S. Mark: 'The Son of Man came to give His life a ransom (λύτρον) for many,' and 'This is My Blood which is shed for many for the remission of sins' (Matt. xxvi. 28).

creeds were antagonistic and never could assimilate. There must be an end to this make-believe.

Stephen, like his fellow-Christians, regularly attended the Jewish synagogue, and here the mischief began. Unfortunately, it is extremely hard to reconstruct the scene. S. Luke, in the first half of the Acts, was necessarily dependent upon tradition of varying value, and the speeches he records clearly betray the hand of the editor. Apparently, in one Hellenist synagogue after another, Stephen disputed with the Greek-speaking orthodox Jews resident in Jerusalem. From the tenor of the speech attributed to him in Acts, two points seem to stand out prominently. Not only did he preach Jesus as the Messiah (vii. 37, 52, 55, 56), but he spoke of the Jewish Law in a way that wounded Jewish susceptibilities, while he implied that the Temple was not the only place where God could be worshipped.[1]

Stephen's outspoken words led to far-reaching results. The eyes of the Jews at once and for the first time opened to the fact that, if this seemingly innocent Church, which they had hitherto tolerated, taught this indifference and disrespect to the Law and the Temple, they were nursing a viper in their bosom. These blasphemous heretics must be quashed, stamped out of existence.

The Jews were right. There could be no truce, still less any hollow unison, between Judaism and Christianity. The religion of Christ contained within itself principles which of themselves must cause 'the perish-

[1] But see McGiffert, *Apostolic Age*, p. 86 *sqq.*: 'The speech was *not* directed against the Jew's valuation of the Holy Land, Temple and Law . . . Stephen is *not* a forerunner of S. Paul.'

ing of all that was ready to pass away' in decaying Judaism. Hitherto these distinctive principles, with their far-reaching logical issues, had been tolerated simply because they had not been adequately expressed. They had lain dormant in the Apostles' minds because they had not had ears to hear the words Christ preached to them all along. They had understood His obedience to the Law, His visits to the Temple and its feasts, His utterance: 'I am come, not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it.' They had failed to grasp the inner meaning of His words respecting the Sabbath, unclean meats, divorce, ceremonial observances and His strictures on the Decalogue.

Not that the Twelve lacked either courage or sincerity, but they could not shake themselves free from the fetters of the traditional faith in which they had been born and bred. It wanted men from outside, with the Hellenistic training and wider outlook of a Stephen or a Paul, to unfold the new universal principles implicit all along in the religion of Christ.

The break with Judaism had to come; Stephen precipitated it. If a James or a Peter had had their way, they would doubtless have preferred to leave well alone. Stephen's radical outspokenness forced their hands. With him began the transformation of Christianity from a Jewish sect into a universal Church.

Acts tells us that Paul was present at Stephen's trial and martyrdom, and there is no reason to doubt it. He heard his speech, and we can imagine how the words would sink into his heart, though at the time they must have sounded like rank blasphemy in his ears. There is something pathetically dramatic in the

picture of this silent thoughtful spectator watching the opening struggle of a campaign in which he himself was so soon to play so diverse and prominent a part.

From the day that 'the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet whose name was Saul,' Paul became, not only a persecutor, but a leader among persecutors of Christians (Gal. i. 13). Daily was he brought into close touch with them, and what did he see? Were they wicked men leading bad lives? On the contrary, their character and conduct were exemplary. Their lives were marked by a beautiful spirit of simplicity and loving-kindness. In their homes and in their humble gatherings their love to one another seemed unbounded. They were so thoroughly of one heart and of one soul that they were ready to sell their lands and houses and give to the poor. Their lives were wholly given to honest occupations, prayer and good works. The mass of the people looked upon them with admiration and esteem. They met imprisonment, scourgings, death itself with calmness, even with joy, praying for their persecutors with their dying breath.

But they were the enemies of God; this was enough for Paul. He steeled his tender heart against these blasphemers, and readily dipped his hands in their blood, conscious that he was doing God service. Still, knowing as we do the compassionate nature of Paul, can we fancy that there were no searchings and questionings of heart subconsciously whispering to him all the while such thoughts as these: Can these people be so hateful to God when their faith produces such lovely lives and inspires them with this courage, hope and joy

in the face of death? Where do these deluded fanatics find the secret of their peace?

Of course, Paul had not the least doubt of the justice of his own cause or the righteousness of his actions. Any secret misgivings or haunting doubts that may have flashed across his mind he instantly brushed aside as suggestions of the devil. Paul was not a Cardinal Pole, rushing into persecution to throttle his doubts and wash them away in blood. He would have felt a conscious and contemptible hypocrite had he been capable of such a proceeding even in thought.

What of his attitude to the Christian creed? His active Inquisition and house-to-house visits, his presence as chief witness at Christian trials and deaths, had made him familiar with their beliefs and arguments.[1] He knew that they identified their crucified Master with the Suffering Servant of Isaiah, and thus explained the strange sufferings and death of their Messiah. There was, no doubt, some plausibility in that line of argument, but could there be a grain of truth in it? No! a thousand times No! 'Cursed be he that hangeth on a tree!' These words of Scripture were final. Besides, he would know that Isaiah's prophecy did not refer to an individual, but to Israel.[2] 'Thou, Israel, art My servant.' None the less, sweep them contemptuously aside as he would, Paul had for years been brought constantly face to face with the beliefs and arguments of Christians, and, without his knowing it, they had

[1] He would be certain to fight against Christians, not only with material weapons, but also with those weapons of argument at which he was ever such an adept.

[2] Paul never uses this argument of the Suffering Servant; the other Apostles often.

struck deeper root in his subconscious self than he thought. He had not the faintest conception of it himself, but, even before his conversion, the foundations of his faith were undermined.

With all his Pharisaic convictions, Paul was ever a man of a logical and critical mind and of an intensely tender heart. Deeply thoughtful, he brooded profoundly over all his experiences. His own faith was unsatisfying; Christians perplexed him; the agony he inflicted on others hurt his sympathetic soul. This, and much more to the same effect, is the only meaning we can attach to the words he is represented as hearing: 'It is hard for thee to kick against the goads.' New light was pouring in upon him from every quarter, and he refused to open his eyes to it. His old creed was sapped and decaying at the roots, yet he clung to it all the more. He was painfully conscious of his failure to achieve his own righteousness in the Law, yet he crushed the bare suggestion that the Law could not work righteousness as a snare of Satan. He had secret misgivings about Christianity, like those attributed to his master, Gamaliel (Acts v. 34 *sqq.*), but he would not whisper them even to himself. He rebelled at heart against the inhumanity of his inquisitorial zeal, which sacrificed pure and humble lives wholesale, yet he did it all the more: God had spoken in His Bible and ordered it; who was he to question God's express commands?

At heart Paul was half converted before his conversion, yet he would have indignantly and rightly, up to the moment of his conversion, repudiated such a suggestion as a lie and an insult. He would have been

intensely shocked at the bare idea that he could ever so degrade himself in his own eyes as to join the ranks of the accursed Nazarenes, blasphemers, 'servers of other gods.' None the less, the field of Paul's heart was white unto the harvest. The seed was God's, the growth was God's, but Paul had also done his share. The seed had fallen on good ground, and Paul had honestly prepared the soil, and watered where God had planted.

One thing more, and one only, was now needed. God did it. Nothing could win Paul over to Christ but the personal vision of the Risen Christ Himself. Even to the most bigoted Pharisee the resurrection of Jesus as a proved fact must mean this: God has set His seal to His Messiahship and Christians are absolutely right. Once give Paul a clear and unmistakable proof that Jesus is really risen from the dead and he is won for Christ. Till then he will cling to the text: 'He that hangeth on a tree is accursed of God.' In his eyes the Crucifixion is a judgment of God, a clear proof that Christ's claims to the Messiahship are sheer blasphemy, and nothing short of revelation of Christ in visible form to Paul himself will eradicate this fixed conviction.

This strange thing happened. The one 'sign' that could convince Paul was vouchsafed to him. 'God revealed His Son in Paul.' How? We do not know. Need we ask? The one thing needful was that Paul should see Him, and he did. To his dying day he was fully convinced that he had verily and truly seen Jesus. About that which he saw he never wavered.

We may lay all the stress we please on Paul's

psychic, visionary, ecstatic temperament, for it is there.[1] We may say that convictions, at which his subconscious, subliminal self had long been working without his knowledge, suddenly, like a flash, crossed the threshold of consciousness and startled him as a revelation from God Himself. This may be true. We accept these explanations and welcome them. Anything that eliminates the magical element in Paul's conversion makes it all the more simple, natural, reasonable—that is to say, more divine, more in keeping with God's invariable way of working. What we will not concede is that you can leave God's share in the conversion out of the reckoning.

Let us make our meaning clearer by an illustration. We believe that the Universe is one organic whole, with God, Love Divine, as the driving power behind its evolution, and the one key to it. Every moment God is guiding His Universe as a helmsman who never leaves the tiller for one single instant. He directs His world-evolution so wisely, and therefore so simply, that we sometimes fancy it works by itself like clockwork. We can detect and classify some of God's simple methods of working, and we call them Laws of Nature. But we dare not substitute them for God, though some would like to do so.

It is exactly the same thing with Paul's conversion. God's Spirit was behind and in Paul's spirit all the while influencing him and guiding him, because Paul invited and welcomed that guidance. We can now detect some of God's methods of 'evolving' Paul, they are so simple. We call them 'psychological explanations.' But we

[1] *Cf.* 2 Cor. xii.; Acts xvi. 9; Gal. ii. 2.

dare not substitute them for God and eliminate Him altogether, though some would like to do so.

We boldly say: Take into full consideration Paul's psychic nature. Analyse to the utmost all the psychological elements entering into Paul's conversion and rendering it possible. Make it as simple as you can, the simpler the better. But do not forget that, if you ignore the divine impulse which occasioned it, you are trying to explode the gunpowder without the spark.

Whether subjectively or objectively, Paul saw Christ verily and truly. No details of the circumstances of his conversion does he give us in any of his letters. This is all he himself says on this subject: 'It pleased God to reveal His Son in me.' 'Last of all He was seen of me also.' 'Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?' He puts Christ's appearance to himself on exactly the same footing with His appearances to the other Apostles. Others might question, and did question, the reality of Paul's vision; he *knew*.

We shall be asked: How does this view of Paul's conversion tally with the account in Acts? Can the two be reconciled? We shall attempt to answer this question in our next chapter.

CHAPTER VIII

ACTS—ITS HISTORICAL VALUE

In the Acts we have a full detailed account of the circumstances of the Christophany to Paul in three distinct passages. If we place them side by side we shall see that they do not exactly tally with each other nor with Paul's own account :—

IX. 1-19	XXII. 6-16	XXVI. 12-18
(*a*) 'Suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven.'	(*a*) 'Suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me.'	(*a*) 'I saw a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them that journeyed with me.'
(*b*) 'He heard a voice saying unto him,' etc.	(*b*) 'I heard a voice saying unto me,' etc.	(*b*) 'I heard a voice saying unto me in the Hebrew language,' etc.
(*c*) 'He fell to the earth.'	(*c*) 'I fell unto the ground.'	(*c*) 'When we were *all* fallen to the earth.'
(*d*) 'They that journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing the voice, but seeing no man.'	(*d*) 'They that were with me beheld indeed the light, but they heard not the voice.'	(*d*) Omitted, but v. 14 implies that the men heard or saw something.
(*e*) Paul, sightless, led to Damascus.	(*e*) ditto.	(*e*) Omitted.
(*f*) Three days sightless and fasting.	(*f*) Omitted (but see vv. 10, 11).	(*f*) Omitted.
(*g*) Christ appears to Ananias in a vision telling him Paul 'hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in' and healing his blindness. Ananias reluctant till Christ tells him : 'Go thy	(*g*) Omitted (but implied in v. 12 *sqq.*).	(*g*) and (*h*) Omitted.

IX. 1-19	XXII. 6-16	XXVI. 12-18
way: for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My Name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.'		
(*h*) 'And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received his sight.'	(*h*) 'Ananias came unto me and said, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And in that very hour I looked upon him. And he said, The God of our fathers hath appointed thee to know His will, and to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from His mouth. For thou shalt be a witness for Him unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.'	(*h*) No mention of Ananias at all. *Christ Himself* immediately after voice and words of (*b*) adds: 'But arise, and stand upon thy feet: for to this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen Me and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people and from the Gentiles unto whom I send thee, to open their eyes that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in Me.'
(*i*) (Paul) forthwith arose and was baptised.	(*i*) Ananias says: 'Why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptised, and wash away thy sins, calling on His name.'	(*i*) Omitted.
(*j*) Paul preaches Christ 'many days' (23) in Damascus.	(*j*) Omitted.	(*j*) 'I preached to them of Damascus first.'

A review of these three accounts shows that they all agree in substance, though they differ in details, often on material points. The differences, however, do not constitute a valid argument against the *general* truth of the narrative. The fundamental fact of Christ's appearance to Paul is common both to his own Epistles and

all three passages of the Acts. The fact that Paul himself omits all details in his letters may be due to one or other of two causes: (1) he attaches less importance to them than later Christians do; (2) they may be largely legendary embellishments.

All he tells us in his Epistles amounts to this: 'Last of all He was seen of me, as of one born out of due time, that am not meet to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God' (1 Cor. xv. 8 *sqq.*). 'Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?' (1 Cor. ix. 1). 'The Gospel which was preached of me is not after man, for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. . . . But when it pleased God . . . to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem . . . but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus' (Gal. i. 11 *sqq.*).

One other passage should be added. It is very suggestive, and may either be (1) a reminiscence, or (2) the source of the 'bright light from heaven' on the road to Damascus. 'For God, who commanded the light to shine in the darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ' (2 Cor. iv. 6).[1]

To sum up. What are the facts we gather from the three Acts accounts?

[1] But *cf.* Heb. i. 3: 'Who being the brightness of His Glory' (ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης), where this phrase is used to express the Eternal being of the Son, who resembles God as the sun's rays the sun, or as the image impressed on wax resembles the seal (χαρακτὴρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ).

(*a*) A great light from heaven *shone about Paul.*

(*b*) *He* heard a voice.

(*c*) *He* fell to the earth.

(*d*) *He* sees Christ.

(*e*) This happened outside Damascus.

What does Paul himself tell us?

(*a*) 2 Cor. iv. 6 may be a poetical allusion to the light.

(*b*) Gal. i. 11 *sqq.* tells us he received his commission direct from Christ at his conversion.

(*a*) 'Have I not seen the Lord?' 'God revealed His Son *in* me.'

(*e*) 'I went into Arabia, and returned *again* unto Damascus' (Gal. i. 17).

Now, if we compare once more the three passages in the Acts we also discover that, while they unanimously assure us that *Paul* saw the light, heard the voice and fell to the earth, they hopelessly contradict one another as to what his companions saw, heard and did. One passage assures us they heard the voice, the next says they did *not.* Two tell us Paul alone fell to the ground, the third says they all did so. Only one refers to their seeing the light. On the fundamental point of all, the Christophany, the only passage which alludes to it assures us that the companions 'saw no man.'

More than this. There is no getting over the fact that the part Ananias plays in Acts ix. and xxii. is utterly inconsistent with the emphatic statement of Paul himself in Gal. i., as well as with the account of Acts xxvi.

In Gal. i. Paul positively assures us that he received

his commission to preach Christ to the Gentiles direct from Christ Himself, without the intervention of any man, Ananias or any other. He also deliberately states that he received this commission at the moment of his conversion. On this point Paul's own version agrees thoroughly with Acts xxvi., but, except by a *tour de force*, it cannot be made to square with Acts ix. or xxii. There we are distinctly told that Paul did not receive his commission direct from Christ, but has to be introduced to his work by the agency of Ananias. Further, in Acts xiii., the commission comes to him through the human agency of certain prophets at Antioch.

What are we to make of these variations and discrepancies? How far do they affect the historicity of Acts? In the Acts, as in the third Gospel, S. Luke was mainly dependent upon tradition, except in the 'we' sections, where we have the report of an eye-witness. His sources of information were not all of the same value, very far from it. He is a born artist, a poet-painter, a man of great literary skill and tact, but essentially uncritical. Thus he constantly gives us duplicate or even triplicate accounts of the same facts, derived from different sources, without attempting to harmonise them. Inconsistent pictures of the same event are hung side by side without any clear perception of their incongruity. We have an instance of this in his three accounts of the conversion of Paul, but it occurs so frequently that we need only quote one other glaring case. In S. Luke xxiv. the Ascension takes place *on the Day of the Resurrection*, while in Acts i. S. Luke fixes its occurrence *at the end of forty*

days—a new fact of which no other New Testament writer has any knowledge.[1]

Bacon and Schmiedel have also made a strong case against the historical accuracy of Acts on two other grounds: (1) There is a pronounced apologetic tendency running through the book, making its Christians of one heart and one soul, and suppressing allusions to the feud between the Apostles and Paul. (2) The author has an unquestioning reverence for the Twelve which makes him give them, whenever possible, the precedence over Paul.[2]

Far from admitting that Paul is the first Apostle to the Gentiles, all mention of his journeys to Arabia, Syria and Cilicia (Gal. i.) is omitted, and it is made out that not he but Peter gains the first Gentile converts. It is to Peter, not Paul, that credit is given for the solution of the difficult problem: how ought law-abiding Jewish Christians to live together in one and

[1] Apart from S. Luke—and the spurious conclusion of S. Mark—no other New Testament writer knows anything of a *visible* Ascension.

[2] Only in Acts xiv. 4 and 14 does Luke call Paul (and Barnabas) 'apostles,' and then only in the sense of 'delegates.' Luke reserves the title for the Apostles *par excellence*, and defines the term in Acts i. 21 in a way that excludes Paul. In Acts the Twelve are Heads and Directors of the Church. Certain functions are exclusively theirs. Baptism does not confer the gifts of the Holy Spirit without the laying on of the Apostles' hands (viii. 14-17). They appoint local officers in the Church. Contributions are laid 'at the Apostles' feet.' The question of the obligation of Gentile believers to observe the Law is referred to them assembled in Council at Jerusalem. In Acts ix. 1–xi. 18 the Twelve even seem to direct Paul (*vide infra*). 'The author of Acts evidently looked upon the Twelve as constituting an Apostolic college, which had in its hands the government of the Church, and the members of which remained at Jerusalem, at the head not only of the congregation there, but also of the church at large' (McGiffert, *Apostolic Age*, p. 46).

the same church with Gentile Christians who keep not the Law? And Peter, on the strength of a divine revelation, comes exactly to the solution which in reality it was left to Paul to achieve after a hard battle at a much later date. Now, had the incidents in connection with Cornelius' vision (Acts x.) really occurred at this early date, there would have been no Council of Jerusalem at all. Peter's vision (x. 11 *sqq.*) and God's own express revelation, as well as Cornelius' reception into the Church, would have already settled the whole matter long beforehand. The Apostles would not have dared to question God's words: 'What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.'

In precisely the same spirit of deference to the Twelve as Paul's superiors, Luke makes Paul in Acts ix. 26-31 come straight to Jerusalem after his departure from Damascus, and places him under the Apostles' protection and direction. To save his life, they send him to Tarsus. Then 'came to the ears of the Church in Jerusalem tidings' of the conversion of several Gentiles at Antioch by men of Cyprus and Cyrene (Acts xi. 22). The Twelve at once take the matter in hand. They send Barnabas as their representative to Antioch, and he goes to Tarsus to seek Paul to act under him. Barnabas and Saul—note the order for several chapters—return to Jerusalem with relief for the poor. It is only some fourteen years after his conversion, according to this portion of Acts, that Paul is commissioned to the Gentile Apostleship, and this by the laying on of hands of the Church at Antioch! This is utterly at variance with Paul's own emphatic assertions in Gal. i.

Apologetic S. Luke will not admit, either, that the

Twelve and Paul ever were at feud. In Acts, Paul never comes into conflict with the original Apostles or their followers as he does in the Epistles. The one misunderstanding that arises is cleared away *by the Apostles* (Acts xv.), who impose conditions of which Paul knows nothing in his letters. The sore dispute with Peter at Antioch is passed over in silence.

Another curious feature in Acts is the strange parallelism in the experiences of Peter and Paul. Both begin their ministry with the healing of a man lame from his birth, and go on to the cure of another sick man. Both work miracles of healing, the one with his shadow, the other with 'handkerchiefs and aprons.' Both bring a dead person to life. Both heal many men at once (v. 16; xxviii. 9). Both decline divine honours in almost the same words (x. 26; xiv. 15). Both meet magicians and perform miracles of judgment (Simon Magus (*cf.* Ananias), Elymas). Both are miraculously delivered from prison. Both have a vision at the same time as another man has a vision, and, in each case, the vision overcomes the reluctance of the Christian to visit the 'seeker after Christ' (Peter-Cornelius; Ananias-Paul).

As regards the speeches, we need only repeat Harnack's words, 'the great discourses throughout the Acts are composed by S. Luke,' though they fairly represent the gist of what was actually said. 'At any rate, he makes S. Peter speak differently from S. Paul.'[1] Among the ancients it was a well-recognised and perfectly legitimate literary device to place fictitious speeches in the mouths of their characters. In some

[1] *Luke the Physician*, p. 129.

cases (*e.g.* Stephen's speech) the author drew from good sources, but we can never press the details.

S. Luke was a writer of consummate literary taste and skill, but he is writing forty years after the events narrated in the early part of the Acts, and twenty years after its latest portion. In the 'we' sections he is trustworthy, and wherever he is on his own ground. 'S. Luke is at home in Asia Minor and on the sea. The narrative portion of Acts xx. is full and correct enough for a guide-book, and the voyage of Paul, with the shipwreck, reads like what no doubt it really is, an account written by an eye-witness. But when the same author is writing of Palestine, he is merely well-read and dependent on second-hand authorities, and frequently falls into error. It is therefore unjustifiable to press Luke's proved accuracy with regard to the conditions of society, proper names, titles, etc., in Asia Minor as an argument for the accuracy of his knowledge of Palestine.'[1]

In his remarkable vindication of S. Luke and the Acts, Harnack has fairly shown that Acts is 'not only, taken as a whole, a genuinely historical work, but even in its details often quite trustworthy.' At the same time, he rightly adds a word of caution. 'Luke's real weakness as a historian lies in his credulity in reference to the miraculous; secondly, in a tendency to carelessness and inaccuracy; lastly, in a tendency to work up important situations.'[2]

It cannot well be denied that Acts is written with an apologetic purpose, and by a literary artist who

[1] Burkitt, *Earliest Sources for Jesus' Life*, p. 16.
[2] Harnack, *Acts of the Apostles*, xxxix.

knows how to marshal his facts in a masterly way, with a keen sense of the situations with which he has to deal. The material at his disposal was ample, but of varying value. He treats it with some freedom, and his critical judgment is often at fault. His inconsistencies and the lack of harmony between his various versions of the same facts do not strike him as they jar on us now. In a sense, we should be thankful that Luke has not fused the various sources of his information into one consistent whole, for we can now sort these respective layers and weigh their value for ourselves.

Acts has a decided historical value of its own, for it is clearly based on old and independent records and traditions, but we should be careful to test Luke's facts wherever possible. He is chiefly valuable, for Paul's life, as a supplement to the Pauline Epistles, and a secondary source of information. All in Acts that contradicts Paul's own definite statements in his Epistles must be given up, unless we are to regard these letters of Paul as spurious.

PART II: THEOLOGICAL

CHAPTER IX

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Paul's Epistles 'hard to be understood' [1]

It is not an easy task to translate the language of Pauline theology into the words and ideas of to-day. True, Paul's words are household words to us nowadays, and sound perfectly intelligible, yet are they a very snare.

The reasons are not far to seek. His message comes to us steeped in the Jewish atmosphere of 50 A.D., coloured with the ideas of his age, race, and school of thought. Paul is the child of Rabbinic Judaism, and we know next to nothing of the Rabbinical theology of the first century A.D. Therefore much of our interpretation of his terms is more or less guesswork. How should we interpret modern Protestantism without some adequate working knowledge of the theology of the Reformers? Yet this fairly represents our modern attitude to Paulinism.

[1] *Cf.* 2 Pet. iii. 15-16: 'As our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given unto him, has written . . . in his Epistles . . . in which are some things hard to be understood.'

Again, we live in a scientific age which prides itself on its accuracy and exactness of expression, its severe and purely impersonal way of stating facts so as to set forth things precisely as they are. We carefully clear our minds of all glow of feeling, sentiment or play of fancy, as fatal to all clearness of vision. How can we prosaic matter-of-fact Englishmen hope to grasp the ideas underlying the beautiful imagery, figures of speech and word-pictures of an Oriental Paul? We read Paul's Epistles as if they were written with the logical accuracy and precision of a modern scientific treatise, whereas nothing was further from his mind or more foreign to his nature. With the possible exception of the Epistle to the Romans, Paul did not calmly sit down in cold blood and say: Come now and let us embody our articles of faith in set form. He wrote on the spur of the moment, as occasion demanded, to guide, exhort or rebuke, to help his Churches in their difficulties, to meet their particular needs and spiritual points of view—and to no two alike. He did not address them as if he were a theological professor in a lecture-room. He spoke to them as man to man, 'in the tongue of the children of men,' from heart to heart, and with a freedom of expression and glow of feeling just as if he were talking to them face to face. A born logician, he often appeals to our heads, but he prefers to touch our hearts. In the middle of a closely reasoned argument he goes off at a word and pours out his very soul with an intensity of passion that thrills our hearts. Paul's imagination was too fresh, his heart too warm, to fetter him down to the scientific precision or clearly defined terms of the formal theologian.

We forget this, and constantly put upon his expressions a strain they never were meant to bear.

Worse still, we persist in reading our modern theological and philosophical views into his theology, because he happens to use our modern terms, though with him they stand for totally different conceptions. Is it any wonder if we oft go astray?

Once more, our excellent Authorised Version often misleads us. It was made by men with their heads full of ideas about Paul's theology which are often wrong, and we only see Paul through the spectacles of the Reformers, with his thoughts strongly coloured by theirs. Moreover, the easy-flowing words of our beautiful English version veil the fact that the language of Paul the Rabbi and mystic hides many a pitfall under its familiar terms. We forget that, even in their simple English dress, Paul's Epistles are really speaking to us in a foreign language terribly difficult to understand

We have just glanced at some of the more obvious reasons of Paul's obscurity for modern readers, but we cannot thus briefly dismiss the subject. The question is too important. Here we have the key to the strange variety of opinion about Paul, the lack of appreciation of his theology, the many unscriptural and un-Pauline doctrines preached in his name.

We may roughly classify the causes of Paul's obscurity under six heads :—

(1) The depth of his revelation.
(2) Its Eastern setting.
(3) His Rabbinical cast of thought.
(4) His mysticism.

(5) His inconsistencies, apparent and real.
(6) Our traditional prepossessions.

(1) *The depth of Paul's message.*

'Unto me is this grace given that I should preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid with God.'

S. Paul knew that his revelation was a God-inspired message of an intensely deep and far-reaching nature. In other words, he was a heaven-born genius with a profoundly deep message to mankind. Now it is only commonplace men and trivial truths that command instant acceptance; the utterances of popularly clever men who 'have more than any one else the opinion that all men have.'[1] No sooner do such men speak than all and sundry of us feel as if we had all along been wishing to say that very thing, as if we ourselves could have spoken it. It so perfectly echoes our own views and flatters our self-esteem that we instantly acclaim the clearness, brilliancy and penetration of the man's surprising feat, and his sayings at once become household words.

The thoughts of a Paul, Socrates or Plato are not of this low-level type. They wrench us from our lower plane and set before us ideals of thought and action which are too high for us. We cannot attain to them without a prodigious effort of brain and heart—a troublesome procedure. We do not like geniuses, they make us feel too insignificant, so we call them dreamers.[2]

[1] 'Il a, plus que personne, l'esprit que tout le monde a' (Montesquieu).

[2] *Cf.* O. W. Holmes: 'There never was an idea started that woke up men out of their stupid indifference but its originator was spoken of as a

What is genius? Define genius! We shall not even try, but we can describe it in a very roundabout way, and thus get some idea of Paul.

Every age, no doubt, has its superior man or men; but one so superior as to take rank among the highest of all ages, this is what we call the really great man—the Seer. He is both the creator and creature of his age. All that has gone before him prepares the way for him. The seers who have preceded him have cleared the road up to where he is to start. Thousands upon thousands of lesser men after them have spent their days in the preparations that are to speed his coming. These are his pioneers and sutlers, paving the road marked by his predecessors, and trying to carry it a little farther. But their eyes are dim, their hands feeble, and they do not go far. Still, they have cut down some obstacles that would have impeded his progress.

At last the fulness of time comes, and the man arrives. God has touched his eyes. The scales which dim our sight have fallen from him, and he sees clearly. He starts where his predecessors left off, follows their line, soon passes over the ground covered by his pioneers, advances ever farther and farther, leaving them lagging a long way behind, until he, too, reaches *his* goal. There he stands, with the path behind him clearly marked, beckoning others to come up to him.

Again thousands upon thousands must painfully toil to clear and pave the road he has mapped out, so that it may be a public highway. The task is hard and

crank.' 'The original man stands above us; we suspect it, but, laziness and vanity earnestly assenting, we try to persuade ourselves that he is below us' (Carlyle).

long, but not till this is done is everything ready for the advent of another seer.

This is only a word-picture, but it may serve to show how a God-inspired man, in one intuitive glance of full perception, unravels a whole chapter of God's handwriting where we others can only painfully spell out here a letter and there a verse. It may take centuries before we lesser men make our own the divine message which God has flashed upon him in a moment of intuition. To-day most of us are still lagging far behind a Plato, or glad to feed on the crumbs that fall from an Aristotle's table.

Such a genius was Paul. In a moment of time, on the road to Damascus, God flashed upon him a revelation of Christ which gave him the clue to the sphinx-riddle of existence. By the light of it the purpose of God in creation, history, and redemption was clear to Paul as noonday. His message of God's Universe as an organic whole, with Christ as its centre, source and goal, was too deep, too great, too far in advance of his day to be understood by his contemporaries. None but kindred souls can follow Paul the philosopher and mystic even now. He belongs historically to a generation of long ago, actually to a generation still unborn. The long intervening epoch has only half seen his revelation, and therefore overlaid it with misconceptions to which we cling.

As a missionary, Paul at once made his mark. His success was so Napoleonic that it commanded instant recognition even from his Judaising opponents in spite of themselves. As a moral preacher, his practical and homely teaching appealed to all, for it was suited to

the most simple natures. Not so with Paul the thinker. He is too original and profound. 'Brother Paul, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written . . . in all his Epistles . . . some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned wrest unto their own destruction.'

(2) *The Oriental setting of Paul's theology.* On this point we have already spoken. Paul was an out-and-out Jew, a Jew by birth, a Jew in culture, a Jew in sympathy, a Jew in his passionately emotional temperament and glow of imagination. His was a psychic, ecstatic nature that saw heavenly visions and heard heavenly voices as clearly as we see and hear the most realistic earthly sights and sounds.

To such a highly-wrought soul vivid imagery of language comes as naturally as bald prose to us. True, Paul's was a logical and critical mind, endowed with a philosophic and psychological insight which probes right to the heart of things. But Paul's 'heart of fire and fiery fancy' compels him to record this insight, not calmly and formally, but in swift, vivid, half-formed yet strong outlines, with metaphor piled upon metaphor, and in a style teeming with similes, hyperbole and figures of speech. Yearning for his beloved children, or his heart full of anxiety for them, Paul takes up his pen and writes the thoughts and meditations that come fresh and burning from his inmost soul, the fruit of his ripe experience. His feeling is so intense that his very words catch a life of their own. They are, says Luther, 'living creatures with hands and feet,' as animated as the lively thoughts they embody. Often rhetorical, at times he

even bursts into the pure poetry of his magnificent psalm on Christian Love.

His interpreters too frequently forget this Eastern setting and translate his figurative expressions as if they were so many technical terms taken straight out of a scientific or legal treatise. It has been truly said of Christ and His Apostles: 'We make a mistake if we take their symbols of thought as equivalents of spiritual realities, or if we treat their sentences as propositions from which we may deduce the uttermost corollaries. Their figures are illustrations, not definitions; their expressions were forced upon them by their past thought and experience, and are flung out towards truth as their best means of approximating to it' (Lewis).

(3) *Paul's Rabbinical cast of thought.* Educated for many years at the feet of Gamaliel, Paul was a trained jurist and skilled Rabbinical scholar. To the influence of this Rabbinical training we owe Paul's (*a*) legal phrases, (*b*) allegorical use of the Old Testament.

(a) *Paul's legal phraseology.* With an eye to the Rabbinic office, he had strenuously applied himself to the study of the Law from a juristic point of view on strictly Pharisaic lines. We have seen that the Jew regarded the Law of Moses as final and divine. Scrupulous obedience was due to every jot and tittle of it. Thus alone could righteousness be achieved and a man be justified before God.

Men who do not fulfil the Law are responsible for their negligence; they are sinners, involved in guilt. This guilt must be atoned for, wiped out, or punishment must fall on the offender. Good deeds, meri-

torious acts, voluntary suffering might avail, but with most men their guilt is so great that such compensations are not enough to balance accounts and cancel due punishment. But there was another way: the vicarious sufferings and good deeds of exceptionally godly men. The supererogatory merits of these eminently just and holy persons purged not only their own sins, but could be imputed to others for righteousness and cover their shortcomings.[1]

Here we have the key to many of Paul's legal terms—*e.g.* 'imputation,' 'justification,' and his earlier theory of vicarious Atonement, though from the outset Paul transfigured and ennobled the meaning of these terms.

To the same source we must trace the large number of Pauline expressions drawn from the Jewish sacrificial system—*e.g.* 'sacrifice,' 'blood,' 'offering,' 'propitiation.' These figures and terms are some of the most difficult to interpret in the whole New Testament, because such different views are held of Jewish sacrifices, and we know next to nothing on the subject. Fairbairn maintains that they had an expiatory value in the eyes of Jews. Westcott equally emphatically insists that they had not; 'they disclose no trace of vicarious substitution, nor of propitiation.' We are thus completely in the dark as to what meaning we are to attach to Paul's figurative expressions, 'propitiation,' 'sacrifice,' etc. All we can do is to collate the passages bearing

[1] According to the Rabbis, Isaac made propitiation for Israel by the willing oblation of his own life. God smote Ezekiel that Israel might go free, and martyrdom made propitiation for sin as efficaciously as the day of Atonement. The Old Testament, however, lends no support to this theory. The moral of the 'Suffering Servant' has another application—viz. to win the heathen to God.

on the same theme, and, after allowing for development in Paul's conception, define these sacrificial terms in the way which will best harmonise them all.

(b) *Allegorical use of the Old Testament.* Following the lead of Jewish Rabbis, Paul gives the reins to his imagination in his interpretation of Scripture. The Jewish exegesis of the Bible proceeded on various principles. The words of the Old Testament were regarded as either literal, poetical, parabolic, allegorical, mystic or symbolical. A distinguished Rabbinical school employed no less than thirty-two of these methods of interpretation, some true, some more or less forced, others fantastic. Thus Abram leaving Haran for the Promised Land is a symbol of the soul imprisoned in the body and seeking reunion with God. Adam is the figure of our carnal nature, Egypt the emblem of our bodily prison.

Paul does exactly the same thing. He reads between the lines of the Bible and sees veiled underlying meanings in a most extraordinary fashion. Not only does he tell us a new fact derived from Rabbinical sources, that the Rock followed the Israelites in the wilderness, but 'that Rock was Christ.' In *Galatians*, Hagar and Ishmael stand for the old covenant of Sinai and those who are still in bondage under the Law; while Sarah and Isaac represent the new covenant of grace and the true heirs of the Kingdom of God. At times Paul gives a talismanic force and virtue to the mere words and lettering of Scripture, attaching the greatest weight to what an ordinary reader might regard as the merest details of grammar.

(4) *Paul's mysticism.* Mysticism is a very hard

term to define. Roughly, we may define it as a belief in such a close kinship between God and man that a spiritually enlightened child of God can bring himself into intimate touch with God, merge himself in Him and enter into His innermost counsels and secrets He knows the how and why of creation, sees God immanent in all things and enjoys the blessedness of actual communion with the Highest.

The thought which is most intensely present with the mystic is that of a supreme, all-pervading, immanent God in whom all things are one. 'In Him we live and move and have our being.' Mysticism is, in a way, akin to Pantheism, yet widely different from it, as we shall see.

Paul's mysticism has both a speculative and practical side, and we shall take them in this order.

Speculative. On the speculative side the mystic tries to grasp the how, why and wherefore of the existence of all things. God's Spirit and the mystic's enlightened spirit are so one and at one that he knows God's hidden secrets. God's purposes in creation and history lie before him as an open page in which he clearly reads God's handwriting. The whole scene, from the creation to the end of the world and all the hereafter, is before his eyes as in a play which he knows by heart, so he can tell how it will end long before the curtain drops.

Paul is a pronounced mystic. He is convinced that he has been admitted into the inner counsels of God and initiated into the mystery of His eternal purpose in the creation of the world (Eph. iii. 1-11). He knows what no man has hitherto known, and by the light of the special revelation vouchsafed to him he holds the

clue to the sphinx-riddle of existence, which has been hidden even from angels. He sees that Creation and Redemption are parts of one scheme and 'through the ages one increasing purpose runs.'

We must refer our readers to the Appendix for Paul's solution of the world-problem. It is too long to come in here. Briefly, it amounts to this: God, Love Divine, is the source of all things, but it is entirely through Christ that He works. All things in heaven and earth were created by Christ and for His sake. He is the centre, the alpha and the omega, the source and goal of the Universe, its unifying and life-giving principle. In modern phrase, God's Universe is one whole, and Christ is the meaning of it.

We men are uniquely Christ's own and in His image. The Son of God is our Head and Archetype, the mould in which we are cast. We were already contained in Him before the foundation of the world. But Christ our Head, the heavenly Man, is God's, even as we are Christ's. Therefore God, Christ, Man are all *ideally* contained in the Godhead. Christ as our root and representative thus stands for all mankind. What He is and does they are and do.

Christ came down from heaven, was made flesh, suffered, died, rose again and returned to heaven to re-establish that perfect harmony, unity, oneness with God which man *ideally* possesses as his inalienable possession through his oneness with Christ, but which his sin has temporally robbed him of. Till this reunion of man with God is perfectly restored Christ cannot attain His 'fulness' and Himself be perfected, for we are the Body of which He is the Head.

Indeed, Christ's fulness remains incomplete till not only *all* men, but all angels good and bad, and Nature itself which our sin has injured, are brought in and again made perfectly one with God. One day the whole circle will be complete. The whole universe will be one harmonious organic whole, and God and His Christ will be 'all in all,' They in us and we in Them. All things will end as they began, in perfect love and unity, even as God eternally purposed 'in the riches of His grace.'

Practical. But there is a practical as well as a speculative side to mysticism. Mystics maintain that we are essentially one with God, and therefore should and can be actual partakers of the Divine nature, enjoying the supreme bliss of full and complete communion with God here and now.

This is not Pantheism. Pantheism acquiesces in things as they are. The mystic does not. His inmost motive is deeply religious and practical. He is keenly alive to his unnatural estrangement from God. He knows that he is meant to be at one with God, but flesh and sin are a bar to this perfect union. He longs to bridge this gulf. It is man's chief end in life, and man and God must work together with this end in view. The more he can keep the body under and crucify the flesh with its lusts, the more readily will his spirit and God's Spirit be wedded into one. 'Who will deliver me from the body of this death?' (Rom. vii.).[1]

Here, again, Paul is a pronounced mystic. The mystical element peeps through every page of Paul's

[1] Paul, like all mystics, was an ascetic (see chapter xiv., 'The Flesh').

Epistles. 'I, yet not I, but Christ in me.' 'Our life is hid with Christ in God.' Through Christ's indwelling Spirit working in us the mystical union of Christ and the believer, in Paul's eyes, is so close and intimate that we actually *are* in Christ and He in us. With Paul it is not a mere figure of speech, it is a positive fact. So completely do we coalesce with Him that all He does and is we are and do. We were *actually* crucified with Him on the Cross, and there died to sin. We shared His Grave, and there buried our dead sinful past. We rose from His Tomb, and there rose to newness of life. We ascended with Him, and are living even now His spiritual life in heavenly places. True, not to perfection. We shall not be perfectly one with Christ till, like Him, we have cast off this burdensome fleshly body and been clothed upon with His spiritual body.

Baptism is to Paul the perfect type of our mystical union with Christ, and so is Holy Communion. Some scholars say that in these rites, especially Baptism, Paul only saw a perfect symbol or acted parable of our mystical union, and that he did not attach a magical or mysterious efficacy to the sacrament. This is more than open to question. Paul was nothing if not a mystagogue, and in all 'mysteries' the rites of initiation were not mere forms, but actually identified the initiated with the Deity. In Rom. vi. 1 *sqq.*; Col. ii. 11 *sq.*; Gal. iii. 27; 1 Cor. xii. 12, etc., Paul decidedly seems to regard Baptism as effecting a union and actual identification with the Person of Christ, just as he says in 1 Cor. x. 20 that those heathen who eat idol meats become actually one with the devil, to whom the victim

partaken of has been sacrificed. Similarly he distinctly says that the unworthy use of the Christian sacraments involves bodily sickness, or even death itself (1 Cor. xi. 27-30). Paul undoubtedly seems to have believed, not only that in Baptism we rehearse our Lord's Death when we sink in the water, His Burial when we are hidden in it awhile, and His Resurrection when we emerge from it new and clean, but that Baptism itself is more than a mere rite. This sounds strange in Paul, who made so light of outward forms, but here we have to deal with Paul the mystic. We shall see that even Paul is not always self-consistent.

(5) *Paul's inconsistencies, apparent and real.* Since Jowett first formulated the charge, we are for ever being told that Paul's theology is not self-consistent. No man's views are thoroughly self-consistent for fifteen years at a time, unless his brain and heart have come to a standstill. One might as well say that a seed is not self-consistent because it changes and develops into 'first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.'

In the first generation of Christians events moved with wondrous rapidity, and S. Paul is not consistent, because from the moment of his conversion to the day of his death his mind, heart and spirit moved and developed in response to his environment more actively than any other man of his time.

We are not to imagine that, Minerva-like, his theology sprang into full maturity at once. True, from the first, it all flows naturally from one master-principle, which links all its parts together like a golden thread—the Death of Christ. But its evolution was a

gradual growth which grew with his own growth in experience. The stages of this growth are clearly marked in the various groups of his Epistles.

These letters clearly show that Paul had not fashioned out for himself from the outset a hard-and-fast final theological system.[1] Over and over again is he compelled to review his ground, retreat from one position no longer tenable and advance to another which he now feels bound to include within his line of defence. Now and again he directly contradicts himself (as pedants might judge contradiction), and is ready to start upon new lines of thought to meet old or new problems when fresh light comes to him.

It is all-important to bear in mind these various stages in the evolution of Pauline theology. Every man has a perfect right to ask to be judged by his finished work. We have no right to take a passage out of one of Paul's earlier writings and tie him down to opinions which he may have discarded later on. If we would understand Paul we must take all his letters at one reading. Each Epistle is incomplete in itself till it is supplemented by other passages bringing together the earlier and later pronouncements on the same theme, enabling us to gauge the development or consistency of Paul's ideas.

In Thessalonians, Paul expects the immediate and visible return of Christ in his own lifetime; in 2 Corinthians and Philippians he already realises that his former view was wrong. In 1 Cor. the Resurrection is

[1] From the first, of course, he was clear on two points: (*a*) The universality of the Gospel; (*b*) its absolute freedom from the Law (see chapter x.).

largely a re-animation of the body; whereas in 2 Cor. it is the clothing upon of the Spirit with the 'house that is from heaven.' In one group the teaching is mainly forensic—the Law is central; sin is expiated rather than forgiven, and sonship comes through adoption. In another group the ideas of justification and sonship are approached from a far higher ethical and spiritual plane.[1]

We can no more look upon each Epistle as a quarry whence we may hew four-square dogmas than we have the right to reject any Epistle as un-Pauline, simply because its teaching somewhat differs from that of a certain number of Epistles which we label genuine. To assume that Paul, an ever-developing and creative genius, must self-consistently have said this, that or the other in all his letters is scarcely scientific criticism.

There is, however, an inconsistency, which is real, pervading Pauline theology. The central idea of Paul's gospel of filial obedience, 'faith working through love,' is his beautiful picture of a Loving Father Who does not require from us an atonement before He can forgive, but is Himself in Christ going forth to meet the prodigal son. 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them' (2 Cor. v. 19).

But, side by side with this, there is in Paulinism a distinct survival of the old Pharisaic legalism of vicarious suffering which disputes the field with Paul's gospel of Love. We do constantly detect in the earlier letters another underlying and fainter picture of God as

[1] We cannot emphasise too strongly Matthew Arnold's words: 'Paul's originality lies in his effort to find a moral side and significance for all the processes of the religious life, however mystical.'

the righteous Judge Whose justice is not satisfied till He has exacted the full penalty for sin, even though He must visit the punishment on His innocent Son.

S. Paul could not entirely escape from the limitations of his age and school of thought, even when his own spiritual outlook had advanced far beyond them. The astonishing greatness of Paul is that, coming when and where and whence he did, he grasped the purely spiritual principles of universal religion so firmly and predominantly, and more predominantly through all the last years of his life.[1]

(6) *Our traditional prepossessions.* Paul's theology is hard enough in itself, in all conscience, but his interpreters in after-generations have made it ten times harder and more complex still with their uncritical and partial solutions of it. Worst of all, try as we will, we cannot nowadays keep our minds clear of these later accretions. They are part and parcel of ourselves, ever since we learnt them from our mother's lips.

Pfleiderer rightly says: 'Ecclesiastical Catholicism preserved the dogmatic form of Paulinism and robbed it of its Evangelical spirit. The Reformation remedied this defect, but overlaid Paulinism with the new scholasticism of orthodox Protestantism.' Whether we be Roman Catholics or Protestants, most of us from childhood upwards have been drilled in the catechism accepted by our own Church, its Confession of Faith embodying *its* traditional views of Paul's teaching.

[1] In his treatment of the Death on the Cross, the 'flesh,' the 'spirit,' Paul begins by viewing them objectively, from the outside, and invariably ends by giving them a subjective, inner, moral interpretation; *cf.* his eschatology.

For over three hundred years every clergyman in England has signed the Thirty - Nine Articles, and himself taught others the dutiful acceptance of prayer-book doctrines, creeds and formulæ which may have fully commended themselves to the Reformers as Pauline, while many of them are total misconceptions of his teaching. These traditional interpretations are so familiar and hallowed, they have so long held the field and struck such deep roots into men's minds and hearts, that they are now household words amongst us as God's own Truth.

Here for us lies the greatest obstacle in the way of a right understanding of Paul. We all know that no resistance to progress and truth is so headstrong as that offered by custom and prejudice, yet we all approach Paul's Epistles with our own traditional views and prepossessions. It is as hard for us to escape from them as it was for Paul to shake himself entirely free of his Rabbinic Judaism. The thing cannot be done.

It is more than open to question whether a true and adequate account of Paulinism can be written just now. Who is to write it? If you are a Christian, you must have your prepossessions and cannot be impartial. If you are not a Christian, you cannot know the real Paul or do him justice, for one can only know a religion from within, and its true secrets do not reveal themselves to an outsider in the study.

It is from within Christianity that the reform of Paulinism must come, and when we consider the broadening and far-reaching changes for the better that have come over our religious views during the last fifty years, we may well take heart of grace.

CHAPTER X

(*a*) PAUL'S KNOWLEDGE OF THE HISTORICAL JESUS (*b*) GENUINENESS OF THE PAULINE EPISTLES

THESE two questions are vastly important. Paul was no immediate disciple of Jesus. What did he know of His earthly Life and Teaching? Does he ignore it altogether? What does he mean by saying that all he knew 'I was taught it by the revelation of Jesus Christ'?

Again, some scholars accept thirteen Epistles of Paul as genuine, others ten, others seven, others four, some reject them all. This is a question which vitally affects our views of his theology.

These preliminary questions must be considered before we are in a position to approach our main theme.

(a) *Paul's knowledge of the earthly Life and Teaching of Jesus.*

What did Paul know of the historical facts of Jesus' Life? This is a question which is being hotly contested to-day. One large school of modern scholars insists that Paul had little or no interest in the historical facts of Jesus' Life, and knew little or nothing about them. Another school, which is growing larger every day, flatly and emphatically contradicts both clauses of this statement.

At first glance the 'Noes' seem to have it, on Paul's own showing. We should naturally have expected that a recent convert with no personal knowledge of Christ or His teaching, except what he had picked up in the course of his persecution of Christians, would at once have placed himself at the feet of the Apostles, or other competent guides, for instruction in the articles of the Christian faith. But what do we actually find? Paul does precisely the reverse. He at once goes into Arabia, there to be alone with his God. 'Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood, neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were Apostles before me, but I went into Arabia.' (Gal. i. 16, 17.)

This is strong evidence, but there is stronger still to follow. If there is one point on which Paul is keenly sensitive, it is in the matter of the absolute originality and independence of his gospel. 'I neither received my gospel of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.' He insists over and over again that his gospel is the fruit, not of information at second-hand, but of his own direct personal heart-knowledge of the crucified, risen and 'glorified' Christ. It is based on personal experience, not on the earthly facts of Christ's life. 'Though we have known Christ after the Flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more.'

This explains a fact which otherwise would be passing strange. In Paul's Epistles there is hardly any allusion to the historical Jesus. Not one of the parables is mentioned. There is no reference to the miracles. Hardly a single saying of our Lord is quoted. The few references that may hint at a knowledge of Christ's teaching are meagre in the extreme.

Most significant of all is the fact that Paul never quotes our Lord's strictures on the Law in his own attacks on it. This seems all the more remarkable when we remember that Paul's quarrel with Judaisers was precisely our Lord's own quarrel with the Jews. Now, if Paul had quoted Christ's words—say on unclean meats, or on tradition, or even on the Decalogue—the saying of Jesus would have carried instant conviction with Christian converts as coming direct from the Master. Why did Paul not do this? Apparently he did not know of the saying that would have told so entirely in favour of his own arguments.[1]

This is the case as it is stated by the negative school, who maintain that Paul knew little or nothing of the historical Jesus. And in the face of their evidence there hardly seems to be room for any other alternative.

The rival school retorts: These statements are gravely exaggerated. Paul knew much more of the historical Jesus than appears on the surface of his letters. We quite admit that in Paul's Epistles the historical facts of the Life fall surprisingly into the background, but his silence proves nothing. Like the writer of the Fourth Gospel, his one theme is the 'glorified' Christ. He begins at the point at which the Life of Jesus ends according to the Flesh.

Paul and the Twelve preach the same Gospel of a crucified and risen Christ Who is the Light and Saviour

[1] Similarly, Paul wants an instance of Christ's humility. Jesus' Life supplied endless material in incident upon incident illustrating our Lord's humility. Yet Paul cites not one of these, but goes right back to the pre-natal fact of His renunciation of His Glory: 'Though He was rich, He became poor.'

of the world, only Paul has come to his gospel along a totally different road from theirs. The Twelve started from their experience of an earthly Christ, Paul from his of a spiritual and heavenly Christ. The Twelve still live in the memories of hours, days or years spent in familiar intercourse with the human Jesus. Paul's experience, read in the light of his heavenly vision, has given him a clear insight into the deep inner meaning of the Death and Resurrection of our Lord. Therefore the wonder is, not that there is so little reference to the historical Christ in the Epistles, but that there is so much. For there are positive indications in the Epistles that Paul had a much fuller knowledge of the Life than is often admitted. He refers to our Lord's sayings—*e.g.* against divorce (1 Cor. vii. 10); —for the right of those who 'preach the gospel to live of the gospel' (1 Cor. ix. 14). He gives us the full and exact words of consecration at the Institution of the Last Supper. He records many expressions which so strikingly recall utterances attributed to Christ in our Gospels that he must clearly be referring to words of our Lord. If we may trust Acts, he even knows of some sayings of our Lord which are quite new to us—*e.g.* 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

These quotations of his are only samples of many more he might easily have given us from his well-furnished store had he so pleased, or had the occasion demanded it. We can see this clearly from his detailed knowledge of the Last Supper, and for this reason. If the peculiar circumstances of the Corinthian Church had not drawn forth from the Apostle a full account of the Institution of the Eucharist, it might easily be

argued that he knew next to nothing about the Last Supper, for he does not mention it elsewhere.[1]

Apart from the sayings, Paul's Epistles prove that he knows a great deal about the Person of Christ and His teaching generally. As Dr. Sanday truly remarks, 'If we only had that one verse: "The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but *righteousness, peace and joy* in the Holy Ghost," it would tell us that the teaching of Jesus had deeply sunk into Paul's soul. There was only one school where the Apostle could have learnt that lesson—the school of Jesus.'

When we come to the Person of Christ, Paul not only knows that Jesus was born under the Law, of the seed of David and 'knew no sin,' but in his portrait of the character of Christ he has selected just those traits which are known to us in the Gospels—*e.g.* 'the meekness and gentleness of Christ' (2 Cor. x. 1; *cf.* S. Matt. xi. 29).

Our own firm belief is that Paul had not only a good working knowledge of the historical Christ, but a fairly complete knowledge. A man of Paul's honesty and intelligence could not have been a chief persecutor of Christians for so many years without making himself thoroughly well acquainted with their views and the teaching and history of their Master. Further, he himself tells us that, three years after his conversion, he went up to Jerusalem to visit (ἱστορῆσαι, lit. 'to interrogate') Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. Need

[1] Paul is writing to Churches in which he and his companions had already worked for a long time. They had long since been taught, by him or by catechists, the Life-Story. In the Epistles this knowledge is taken for granted. For example, Paul never tells us Baptism was instituted by Christ, yet he and his converts surely knew it.

we ask what would be the subject of their conversation? He also had ample opportunities of gaining the fullest knowledge of the Life and teaching of Jesus in his long intercourse with such Christians as Barnabas and Mark, long before he wrote any of his Epistles.

Besides, is it even conceivable that Paul should have considered himself fully equipped to preach the Gospel to Gentiles without a full knowledge of the Life of our Lord? To people who knew the main facts of Jesus' life, it might be enough to insist on an acknowledgment of the Godhead of Jesus and a belief in the saving and cleansing power of His Death and the meaning of His Resurrection. But it is idle to preach to Gentiles that Jesus is the Christ, God Himself, unless the preacher's hearers know who and what Jesus is and all about Him. The Gospel story must be told from the beginning. How could Paul do that if he did not know it?

But, it will be asked, what then does Paul mean by 'The gospel which I preach I neither received of man, neither was I taught it, but by revelation of Jesus Christ'? We have already answered this question. S. Paul claims that the Christ he preaches is the 'glorified' spiritual Christ Who appeared to him on the road to Damascus—the Christ Whom he knows so well, Whose Death and Resurrection have done so much and mean so much for him.

This is all he means by 'my gospel'—and it does not preclude the idea of his having learnt much from others respecting the *historical* Jesus. As a matter of fact, we know that Paul had derived a great deal more from Apostolic tradition than his expressions imply. He

himself acknowledges this indebtedness. For instance, in 1 Cor. xv. he tells us: 'I delivered unto you that which I also received,' and straightway gives us a case in point in his long list of the appearances of our Lord after His Resurrection, including two—that to James and that to the 500 brethren—which are quite new to us.

Even his statement 'I received from the Lord' must not be pressed too far. What does it really mean? It is always best to interpret Scripture by Scripture itself. We read in Acts: 'The Holy Ghost said, Separate Me Paul and Barnabas,' and 'The Spirit of the Lord suffered them not to go into Bithynia.'[1] How did the Holy Ghost speak? Acts xxi. 11 tells us. Agabus the prophet thus begins his words of warning to Paul: 'Thus saith the Holy Ghost.' This, then, is how the Lord spoke to men generally in Paul's day, through accredited human mouthpieces. Therefore when S. Paul tells us that he received this or that information about the historical Christ from the Lord, he does not mean to imply that this knowledge of facts came to him entirely without human intervention. The spiritual part of his gospel did, but not the historical information. All he means is that he is convinced he received his facts from an accredited and thoroughly reliable Christian source.

(b) *The genuineness of Paul's Epistles.*

Paul's Epistles are the earliest of our New Testament books. S. Paul died in 65 A.D.,[2] and never saw

[1] *Cf.* xv. 28, 'It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us.'

[2] The dates of S. Paul's conversion and martyrdom are thus given:—

	Harnack	Ramsay	Lightfoot
Conversion .	.. 30 A.D.	33	34
Martyrdom .	. 64 ,,	65	67

one of our Gospels, for S. Mark (67-70 A.D.) had not yet been composed. His own Epistles were written, quoted and officially recognised long before our Gospels. S. Matthew's *Logia* (Q)—*not* our S. Matthew—he may have seen and used, and probably did, for it was composed about 50 A.D. It was a collection of the 'sayings of Jesus,' and Dr. Sanday is probably right in his belief that 'it was a manual for the use of Christian missionaries and to put into the hands of their converts as supplying them with a rule of life.' The book was well known and in common use, and no more authoritative and reliable source of information could Paul have found for his own instruction; for it was composed by an Apostle within twenty years of Christ's Death. In all probability it is simply because our first and third Evangelists enshrined the *Logia* so completely in their own work that this priceless collection of the 'sayings of Jesus' is lost to us in its original form.

The first testimony to the Epistles of Paul is borne by the Apostolic Fathers, Clement of Rome, Polycarp and Ignatius. Thus Clement of Rome, writing to the Corinthians in 93-97 A.D., in the forty-seventh chapter of his Epistle says: 'Take up the Epistle of the blessed Paul the Apostle. What wrote he first unto you in the beginning of the Gospel? Of a truth he charged you in the Spirit concerning himself and Cephas and Apollos, because even then ye had made parties.'

This one epistle of S. Clement is enough, in Professor Schmiedel's view, to guarantee the early date and authorship, not only of one, but of the four great Epistles of S. Paul—viz. Romans, 1 and 2 Cor-

inthians and Galatians—for they stand or fall together. Indeed, Clement transcribed Rom. i. 29-30, though he does not name Paul on this occasion.[1]

The Epistles of Paul were the first to find their way into the New Testament Canon. Strange to say, heretics seem to have been the first to form such a Canon, and Marcion (140 A.D.) paved the way. Marcion detested Jews and, therefore, their Old Testament. Only in Christ was the true God revealed, not in the Old Testament Jehovah. S. Paul alone had grasped the true significance of Christ's Gospel, the older Apostles had misunderstood it. Into his Canon, therefore, Marcion only included ten Epistles of S. Paul (excluding the Pastoral Epistles) and one Gospel—the universal Pauline Gospel of S. Luke. But he omitted portions of the Epistles, so as to still further purify them from Jewish colouring.

In the Muratorian Canon (175-230 A.D.), the first formal list we possess of the New Testament books by name, our thirteen Epistles of S. Paul are all given, as well as an Epistle to the Laodiceans and another to the Alexandrians. Of these two we know nothing definite, though some scholars identify the former with 'Ephesians' and the latter with 'Hebrews.'

The identity of Marcion's Epistles of Paul with our own is practically admitted nowadays by most leading scholars.

This proves that our present collection was in existence before 140 A.D., excluding, of course, the Pastoral Epistles so far as Marcion's evidence goes. Marcion found his ten Epistles accepted by the Church

[1] *Encycl. Biblica*, p. 1622 (*b*).

in his day, and simply adopted them after making certain changes in their text.

Now, when we remember that these same ten Epistles are quoted by name in the Muratorian Canon as portions of Scripture whose claims have been duly examined by the Church and accepted as canonical, we can arrive at only one conclusion. The Church certainly did not so accept and honour them at the mere valuation and on the sole authority of Marcion. They despised and hated him as a heretic, 'the first-born of Satan.' The ten Pauline Epistles must have been officially recognised as Paul's by the Church for at least a generation before Marcion. The very fact that Marcion himself pins his faith on them in itself proves it. He knew that the Epistles told strongly in his favour and that their authority could not be disputed.

If so, this brings these ten Epistles right back to about the year 100 A.D. and in the form in which we have them now. Further, as Zahn shows, if a forger in 100 A.D. had tried to palm off these ten Epistles as Paul's, the forgery would immediately have been detected. Clement's letter tells us that some of the elders appointed by the Apostles at Corinth were still living in 96 A.D. 'It goes without saying that up to 100 A.D. there were Christians living in Corinth and elsewhere who had been members of the Church in Paul's lifetime. How is it conceivable that a forged letter, written between 80-100 A.D., could have taken in the older members of these various Churches? Why had they never heard of the letter before? Even if the forger were well enough acquainted with the several

Churches to know the real names of persons alive in Paul's day, and assign them their proper rôles, such personal remarks, entirely new to them, must have been read by these persons or their relatives with the greatest interest and no little astonishment, and the fraud would have instantly been detected. As a matter of fact, this was actually the fate of the spurious letters put forth in Paul's name in his own lifetime.' (*Cf.* 2 Thess. ii. 2; iii. 17.)[1]

On the strength of the external evidence, supported by the still stronger internal evidence, the majority of modern scholars accept these ten Pauline Epistles as genuine. Even Harnack so treats them, though he still has some doubts about Ephesians. Some leading scholars also mark 2 Thessalonians as doubtful, but they are in a small minority. The Pastoral Epistles are the only ones which nowadays nearly every critic rejects, though they are supposed by many scholars to be based on authentic letters of Paul, worked up and enlarged by another hand.

It is only fair to add that, since the days of Baur, many leading German and Continental critics have devoted immense pains and research to the study of the Pauline Epistles, and reject all but Galatians, Romans and 1 and 2 Corinthians, mainly on internal grounds.

These four Epistles undoubtedly stand or fall together. There is a unity of style and subject-matter in them all which indicates identity of authorship. It is precisely because this is lacking in the later Epistles that this Continental school rejects them.

[1] Zahn, *Introduction to New Testament*, i. 157-158 (abridged).

But the force of this argument is at once broken when we remember that there is a development clearly perceptible in the various groups of the Pauline Epistles simply because there was a decided development in Paul himself. We have already entered fully into this question in chapter viii. in dealing with Paul's 'inconsistencies' and we need not repeat ourselves here. To assume that Paul, 'an ever-developing and creative genius,' must consistently have said this, that or the other in these disputed letters is hardly scientific criticism.

The whole method of this radical school is arbitrary. To select a certain number of Epistles and to say, *ex cathedra*: these letters alone and their contents are Pauline; any others containing a different, even though not contradictory teaching, are not Pauline—seems an illogical mode of procedure. On what grounds do these critics know that their selected list is any more genuinely Pauline, Paul's work at all, than the later Epistles they reject? What is their infallible standard of authenticity?

The most recent Continental radical school, represented by Loman and Van Manen, and following in the steps of Bruno Bauer, sees the bad logic of this line of argument, and more consistently makes a clean sweep of the whole batch of Pauline Epistles as spurious. They maintain that the external and internal evidence for the so-called genuine 'principal Epistles' is just as strong, that is to say, just as weak, as for the rejected Epistles, and that they are none of them Paul's. 'We can accept neither 14, nor 13, nor 9 or 10, nor 7 or 8, nor yet even the four so long regarded as unassailable.

They are all, without distinction, spurious, late productions.'

This extreme method of procedure may be logical in its way, but by far the majority of leading scholars look upon it as a *reductio ad absurdum*. On these radically critical lines we should have to eliminate from history all its great and epoch-making men and events —in the end, Jesus Himself. As a matter of fact, 'Bruno Bauer, and Loman also (down to 1884 at least), denied the historicity of Jesus.'[1]

Even such an advanced critic as Bacon writes: 'Paul's Epistles have passed through a fiery storm of criticism and come out almost unscathed. Only one important letter is now seriously questioned, Ephesians, though I am personally convinced of its authenticity. The Epp. to Timothy and Titus are generally regarded as at least partially later fabrications, and 2 Thess. has still some haze of doubt about it. But put all doubtful material together and it makes but a very small part of the whole.'

The approximate date of the respective Epistles is somewhat as follows:—

	Hastings' *D.B.*[2]
1 and 2 Thessalonians	51-53 A.D.
Galatians	53 ,,
1 and 2 Corinthians	55 ,,
Romans	55-56 ,,
Philippians, Colossians, Philemon and Ephesians .	59-61[3] ,,

[1] Schmiedel.

[2] i. 423 (Turner); *cf.* iii. 527.

[3] The dates of the imprisonment letters should probably be rather later.

CHAPTER XI

PAUL'S NEW CREED

FROM the moment of his conversion Paul saw everything in a new light. The Nazarene had conquered. He was the Messiah. God Himself had set His seal to the truth of the Crucified One's claims by raising Him again from the dead, and of this Resurrection he, Paul, was now an eye-witness.

Up to that moment he had fully shared the conviction of his nation, that Jesus was an impostor and a blasphemer.

In Christ's own lifetime the Jews had told Christ to His face that His claims to the Messiahship were preposterous and rank blasphemy against God. Because of this lying blasphemy they had nailed Him to the Cross. The Crucifixion in itself was the clearest possible proof that Jesus was a wicked blasphemer. If He had really been the Messiah, God never would have allowed Him thus to be put to death, especially in that way. 'Cursed be he that hangeth on a tree; yea, accursed of God!' Thus Jesus was proved to be under God's curse. His crucifixion was God's judgment upon Him for His wicked blasphemous claims. It justified the Jews and stultified Christians.

This is why, as S. Paul himself tells us, the Cross

was ever to the Jews an 'offence,' a stumbling-block. With the clear assertion of the Bible itself, 'Cursed be he that hangeth on a tree,' they could not understand how any could be so wilfully blind and foolish as to believe in and worship 'The Hung One.'

On the other hand, the disciples of Jesus retorted: The Cross is *not* the 'judgment of God,' but the very reverse. 'O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered all these things, and to enter into His Glory?' 'Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, they expounded in all the scriptures the things concerning' Messiah. They showed that Jesus was none other than the Suffering Servant spoken of by Isaiah. What else did the words mean if they did not speak of Messiah: 'He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem Him stricken, *smitten of God*, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all'?

Therefore, said the disciples of Jesus, He is proved to be the Messiah, not *in spite of* the Cross, but *because* of the Cross.

Is further proof needed? Here it is, said the disciples. God has raised the Crucified Jesus from the dead. We ourselves have seen Him since His Death on several occasions. He has visibly appeared to Peter, to James, to the Twelve, to 500 of us assembled together. By this stupendous miracle of

His Resurrection, God Himself has set His seal to Christ's Messiahship, and proved that He has entered into His Messianic Glory. More than this, by raising Jesus again from the dead, God has now justified Christians and stultified the Jews. It is not Jesus and His followers who are wicked blasphemers and enemies of God, it is the Jews who have committed the greatest sin it is possible to commit against God by slaying the Messiah. The curse of God has recoiled upon the heads of His murderers.

Which were right? The Pharisees or Christians? One must be, but certainly not both. Till he was on the road to Damascus, Paul, as we have seen, had not a shadow of a doubt in his own mind. The Jews were right at all points, and the story of the Resurrection of the cursed Hung One was a man-invented lie, and he was the more 'mad against them' for it and persecuted Christians all the more.

Then came the Christophany on the way to Damascus, and, like a flash of lightning, the significance of the stupendous vision he saw and the words he heard dawned on Paul in an instant. 'It pleased God to reveal His Son in me.'

These Christians were right all along. Jesus is none other than Messiah. The Jews are the murderers of Him for Whom they have been so long waiting. 'He came unto His own and His own knew Him not,' but nailed Him to the accursed tree as a malefactor.

Again, in a flash of intuition, it dawned on Paul that the Messiahship of Jesus carried with it the most tremendous consequences. The vision of the risen

Jesus made the converted Pharisee see clearly all that was involved in the new faith in the Crucified One. Up to that moment he had believed, with all Jews, that the coming of Messiah was very near, but that the Messianic Kingdom could only come to a righteous people. This righteousness could only be achieved by a perfect 'keeping of the Law,' not offending in one point. His own experience had shown him that not only were the Jews not righteous as a matter of fact, but that there was not the slightest likelihood of their ever becoming so, for no one could possibly act up to the conditions imposed.

Yet the Resurrection clearly showed him that here was Messiah actually come. What then? Clearly this. Righteousness and the Messianic Kingdom must still go together, but not at all in the way he and the Jews had fancied. The Pharisees had thought that a righteous people was a *sine qua non* before Messiah could come. History had proved this to be an impossible condition. The actual coming of Jesus as the Messiah distinctly proved that this righteousness was not to be the work of man by means of keeping the Law, but the gift of God. Messiah had come, not to a righteous people, but to enable them to become righteous.

But how could He make men righteous? How could He make men who were convicted sinners in the eyes of God become no longer 'guilty' in His sight? There was only one way. Christians here again were right. He, Whom 'we esteemed smitten of God, had been wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him,

and by His stripes we are healed. The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.'[1]

'Cursed be he that hangeth on a tree.' After all, the Bible was right, Pharisees were right, yet Christians were right too. On His Cross, Christ *had been accursed*, so as to bear our curse in our stead. 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree' (Gal. iii. 13).

Now all was clear. Not only had God Himself all along been on the side of the Crucified, but the Death of Christ was the Death of Messiah, God's Holy One, for the propitiation of our sins.

Although Paul says throughout his Epistles, 'God revealed His *Son* in me,' Pfleiderer seems altogether wrong in saying that at his conversion Paul immediately identified Christ with the Son of God. This was an after-development. 'Son of God' is never used in Jewish literature as a title of Messiah (2 Esd. and Enoch passages are possible exceptions, but extremely doubtful). The idea of the pre-existence of Messiah was not unknown among the Jews, but always as a Son of

[1] We have already seen that the Twelve apply Isa. liii. to Christ, not so Paul. This was not its true meaning, but it would appeal to every Jew after the event, especially as Rabbis had already applied the passage to Moses. All Jews fully believed in the efficacy of vicarious suffering. 'The death of the righteous makes atonement for sin.' Thus of the Maccabean martyrs it is said: 'Having become as it were a vicarious expiation (*ἀντίψυχον*) for the sins of the nation, and through the blood of those godly men and their atoning death (*ἱλαστηρίου θανάτου*) divine Providence saved Israel which had been evil entreated' (iv. Macc. xvii. 22; *cf.* vi. 27, 29; *cf.* Rom. v. 7; Col. i. 24). For applications of Isa. liii., see Acts viii. 32 *sqq.*; iii. 13, 26; iv. 27, 30; Heb. ix. 28; 1 Peter ii. 21 *sqq.*; 1 John iii. 5, etc. This idea works back into the Gospel tradition—*e.g.* Luke xxii. 37; John i. 29, 36; Luke i. 77, etc., etc.

David rapt up into heaven and reserved there for his manifestation in due time. It was as Messiah Paul recognised Christ at his conversion; the Sonship of God was an idea naturally developed later on.

Messiah's undeserved death on the Cross explains everything to Paul now. It was a death for sin. Not for His own sins, neither was it a triumph of the wicked over the good. It was an expiatory Death for the sins of others. By virtue of it, therefore, the punishment for sin which would otherwise have been visited on others is now remitted. They are clear of sin and its penalty. Messiah's Cross is therefore a Cross of Judgment on Sin, and also a Cross of the Love of God in doing away with man's sin.

This is how the Messianic Kingdom and Righteousness go hand in hand. Paul sees it so clearly now. Messiah has not come to a righteous world, He has come to make the world righteous. The Cross is God's one way of righteousness.

There and then a tremendous revelation flashes upon Paul. If the Crucified—on whom lighted the curse of the Law through His ignominious death—be the Messiah, the bringer in of Messianic salvation, and consequently of Messianic righteousness, then this righteousness has nothing whatsoever to do with the Law. The Law is entirely done away with as a way of righteousness. To believe in Christ as Messiah and still cling to the Law in any shape or form is now an absolute impossibility, a contradiction in terms.

The Cross is God's one way of righteousness, for 'Messiah's Death was not in vain' (δωρεάν). Therefore the Law is not the way any longer.

It is here that Paul's new gospel comes in. He sees what Peter and James and the Twelve do not see, all that is involved in the faith in the crucified One. Christ's Death is the death-knell of the Law! The Cross is God's one way, and there is no other. If man can work out his own salvation by good works of the Law, why did Messiah die? 'If righteousness come by the Law, then did Christ die in vain.' The new righteousness is purely the gift of God in Messiah, and not at all the work of man in any way whatever.

One other corollary Paul sees, there and then, must flow from Christ's Death. Another fundamental article of his Pharisaic creed must go overboard. If Messiah dies for man's sin and cancels it, and if the Law is done away with, then He has come to bring salvation, not only to the Jews, but to all mankind. Salvation and righteousness are no longer of the Jews through their Law. It is the gift of God through Messiah's Death without the Law to all men without exception. He is the Redeemer of humanity. In Him there can be neither Jew nor Greek, barbarian nor Scythian, circumcision nor uncircumcision, bond nor free. Gal. i. 16 proves that this fact dawned on Paul immediately on his conversion.

To Paul the Cross is the central fact of the whole Gospel. Everything else in his theology really flows as a corollary from it, in course of time and reflection, even the eternal pre-existence and Sonship of Christ.

In his Epistles he approaches the Cross from three standpoints :—

(a) *Christ our Substitute.* Man is arraigned at the

bar of God's justice. God's Law has been wantonly transgressed by him. The curse of the Law is upon man, and God has a lawful claim against the guilty sinner. The penalty must be paid in full. Christ takes our place. God accepts sinless Messiah as our perfect and adequate substitute. Our doom was death, for 'the wages of sin is death.' Christ dies in our stead. The Law's and God's full claims are now satisfied. Our whole debt is met and paid. Instead of pronouncing sentence of 'Guilty' on man, the prisoner at the bar, God passes verdict of 'Not Guilty,' and man leaves God's court of Justice without a stain on his character. Christ has taken his sin and given man His own righteousness in exchange.

This purely legal and juristic idea was the starting-point of Paul the converted Pharisee and legal Rabbinist. It lies at the base of his plan of salvation. But Paul does not leave it in this crude and repelling form. The leaven of Christianity soon mellowed his hard doctrine.

(b) *God's Love and the Cross.* 'God was Himself in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them' (2 Cor. v. 19). Paul could not, of course, start with this idea, for at the outset, at his conversion, Christ was only Messiah. Not till he had identified Him with the Son of God could he picture to himself Father and Son as one (Phil. ii. 6) and see in Christ's Cross God's Cross and therefore His Love. Henceforth, although the old idea faintly survives, God is no longer an exacting Judge whose Justice and wrath nothing but the Death of Messiah could satisfy. He is a Father of Infinite Love.

(c) *The Cross and Man's Love.* Once Paul has grasped God's Love on the Cross another corollary follows. God's infinite Love to us awakens in men's hearts a responsive echo of love which transfigures our whole character. It is this aspect of Christ's Death, its inward, quickening, life-giving influence on our own hearts, that is placed ever more and more in the fore-front of Paul's later theology. 'Faith working through Love.'

Thus Paul started with the traditional view of Christ's Death for our sins as our substitute. But he soon got beyond it, though traces of the traditional creed remain to the very end.

From Gal. i. it is clear that his conversion revealed four things to him: (1) Christ is God's Holy One. (2) Christ's Death is the one way to righteousness. (3) The Law is abolished. (4) His own mission to the Gentiles, for there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile now.

'Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood . . . but I went to Arabia,' there to think it all out alone with God. His theology as we have it, at least fifteen to twenty years after his conversion, is the outcome of mature reflection on his own rich personal experience and knowledge of Christ of a lifetime. His Epistles cover probably some eight or nine years only at the very end of his life. We have not the least idea of his views, apart from what dawned on him at his conversion, during the whole of these previous fifteen years or more. When first he comes before us in 1 Thessalonians, we shall see that his

views are still very objective and somewhat crude. They must have been still more so before, unless we adopt the hypothesis suggested by some scholars, that the more or less rudimentary views of Thessalonians are due to the rudimentary character of the Christianity of the Thessalonian Church he is there addressing.

Be this as it may, even during the decade covered by his Epistles the development in Paul's views is rapid and pronounced. More and more does the moral and subjective view of the Cross come to the foreground, while the objective and substitute idea of it recedes into the background ever more and more. As years go by it is mainly the quickening life-giving power of the Death that is ever present to Paul. This is where the view of the Atonement we find in him, and in his disciple 'S. John,'[1] rises so immeasurably above anything else in the New Testament, apart from Christ Himself. Indeed, it is far in advance of much of the current theology of to-day.

[1] This is because Paul and 'S. John' are the two New Testament writers with the truest conception of the Holy Spirit and His work. Therefore they see more clearly than the rest that Justification and Sanctification go hand in hand and *must* do so. Christ's Spirit is in all who are His, and the Spirit and its fruits are inseparable.

CHAPTER XII

PAUL'S THEOLOGY—ITS LEADING TOPICS AND THEIR ORDER

'I HAVE grasped,' says a modern writer, 'the moral tendency of the Christian religion, but I have always been beaten by its mysteries.'

In the presence of Paul's theology a great many people are in precisely the same plight. We have seen why. As modern men we can but think in a modern way. We want our Christianity to be put before us as an issue which is very much alive. We want it so framed that it does not contradict our knowledge and modes of thought in other departments. So when Churches force upon us a dogmatic theology dressed up in Paul's, Augustine's or Luther's words and ideas, upon which the dust of centuries lies thick, it suggests nothing of vital interest to our minds. Speak to men in that way, and you will be met by a dull and soulless stare; put exactly the same facts in the terms of the life they live and the things they know, and they prick up their ears and listen eagerly.

It is idle to deny that Paul's theology, close on 2000 years old, is old-fashioned and often very perplexing, even to professional theologians. But it is with us now, and has come to stay, 'mysteries' and

all. And we cannot spare one chapter of it, for his problems are not dead issues, but our very own to-day and very much alive, only we must translate them into the living speech of living men.

True, we are no longer interested in such old-world questions as whether we need be circumcised, neither are our consciences greatly troubled (except on the score of health) by nice distinctions between clean and unclean meats. We do not nowadays, like Paul's Christians of 1 Cor. viii., ask our neighbour at a friend's table, with bated breath, whether the meat on our plate forms part of a sheep that has just been sacrificed to an idol.

What, we ask, have such quaint old-fangled problems, or Paul's solution of them, to say to us? Much every way. It is a long jump from the Palestine of 50 A.D. to England in 1911 A.D.; but it is only the scenery that has changed. The actors are very much the same so far as human nature and interests go. Tender consciences may not now be troubled over idol meats, but many good Christians still tremblingly ask whether it is right to visit the theatre or race-course, or play cards for money. Uncircumcision or circumcision is a dead issue, but heated controversies over baptism and other outward rites have taken their place. To-day as of old Paul answers these questions aright, if we will but take the trouble to apply his principles.

But it is when he comes to deal with the eternal and absorbing root-facts of sin, death, the sphinx-riddle of life, our Father's Love, the life beyond the grave, that we gauge Paul's undying value and thank God for giving us such a man. With Havet we exclaim: 'I do

not say, this is Paul's theology, I say this is theology.' All we need is to bring the modern mind into close touch with Paul's wise thoughts.

This we cannot do without entering into dry details and reconstructing his historic background. We must perforce dwell on such topics as Paul's psychology, eschatology, his views on 'grace,' 'predestination,' 'election' and so forth. It will prove hard and dull work at times. Yet we must face it. Paul's gold lies hidden in rich veins of ore, but the ore looks unattractive and unpromising till we painfully quarry, crush and refine it. 'We have this treasure in earthen vessels.'

The first question is: In what order shall we deal with the fundamental ideas of Paul's universal gospel of grace? *Salvation through Christ* is his one theme, but the Death on the Cross presupposes and leads us up to a large number of other topics which he cannot possibly omit, if he would give us a scheme of salvation at all.

He has to face such questions as these: Man is a sinner. God cannot be God and yet wink at sin. How is this bar between God and man to be removed? In other words, Paul's scheme of salvation must include: *The righteousness of God; the sin of man; Christ's bridging of the gulf between God and man; the Person and Work of Christ; how our sinfulness is cancelled (Justification); how sin itself is rooted out of our hearts (Sanctification); how this affects our life as Christians individually and collectively (= Church); the life beyond the grave.*

All these topics, and many more, enter into Paul's

system of theology. Are we to take them anyhow, or can we arrange them in some logical order? Is there a natural order which reflects more truly than any other the successive links in Paul's chain of reasoning as they actually presented themselves to his mind? How hard it is to answer this question is proved by the fact that no two scholars agree as to the order in which these subjects should be placed.

Perhaps our best plan is to follow Paul's own lead. A rapid review of his plan of salvation may give us our clue, especially if we take his most methodical, mature and elaborately thought-out Epistle as our model—Romans. In it we have Paul's complete exposition of his soteriology, after twenty years' ripe experience and profound reflection, and it embraces in its compass the whole course of sin and redemption.

We shall not confine ourselves to Romans for all our facts, but we shall follow its order of subjects. Naturally, our space only allows us to give a mere skeleton framework.

Man's sin, its universality. 'There is none righteous, no not one. There is no fear of God before their eyes. All the world is become guilty before God.' Jews and Gentiles are equally bad. This is an unnatural state of things, for it is not carrying out the programme of God. It does not belong to His eternal plan. From before the foundation of the world His purpose was to establish a kingdom of righteousness, peace and joy, in which all His children should live together harmoniously as a united Family under one loving Father-King. Instead of this, what do we actually find? 'Wrath, strife, envyings, revellings, idolatry,' ignorance

and defiance of God's express Will. It is man's bad work spoiling God's eternal plan. All the wrongs and sorrows of men, all the 'groans of creation'—*i.e.* of Nature itself—are the pure outcome of Adam's sin—*i.e.* of man's wantonly flying in the face of God.

God's Righteousness. God is a Father of Love, but He is also holy and righteous. A holy and just God cannot wink at the badness even of His beloved children, and have a blind eye to it as if it were not there. He would cease to be God were He to do so.

Christ's Redemption. Paul's God is above all else a Father of Love, who cannot bear to be thus parted from full communion and fellowship with His beloved children. It is not He who keeps away from them. It is their sin that has made a gulf between God and themselves. His heart yearns for their return. He longs to wean them from their sin and win back their love, for His Love is ever theirs.

How are the two, God and man, to be brought together in perfect unison, so that man may be, in God's eyes, exactly as if he had not sinned? God's Love finds a way (Rom. v. 8) which will satisfy both His Love and His Righteousness. He sends His Son to undo man's bad work. That is, He comes Himself to seek the prodigal sons who will not come to Him. 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.' Here we have God's Infinite Love.

Christ, God's Son, is the Man from heaven. All through Paul's letters Christ is the Head of man, our Archetype, our full representative. Just as, on the flesh side, all men are one with Adam because we are all sprung from his loins, so, on the spiritual side, we

are all one with Christ. He is the Head of the human race, the mould in which we are all cast. Therefore whatever He is and does we are and do, exactly as we all sinned in Adam even before we were born. So Christ can act as our full representative and substitute. Therefore when He died on the Cross we all died there with Him and crucified our sinful flesh. Here we see God in His justice, exacting the penalty for our sins, for 'the wages of sin is death.'

Christ's Spirit and the Christian Life. By His Death Christ paid our debt, and we are now 'Not Guilty' in God's eyes (Justification). More than this, all who are Christ's have His Spirit (*i.e.* Himself) indwelling in them. We are now one with Him. 'I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.' Christ's Spirit is a life-giving Spirit, dealing death to flesh and sin, and wherever this Spirit is, *there* is life and holiness, just as where flesh is, *there* is death and sin. Therefore, through Christ's Spirit, sin is rooted out of man's heart (Sanctification), and eternal life is now guaranteed (Glorification).

Eschatology. The Kingdom of God is thus already established here and now on earth. We are at one with God, His 'adopted sons,' and, as being one with Christ, we are dead to sin, risen to righteousness, actually living now His heavenly life. But not perfectly, so long as we are in the flesh. One day the Christ-Spirit in us will cast aside this fleshly body, be clothed upon with its own heavenly spirit-body (2 Cor. v.), and we shall enter into our full inheritance as sons of God in His Kingdom, and be even as Christ. At one period Paul expected this to be the lot only of

the few righteous, but already in Romans he foresees (chapter xi.) that salvation will be universal. Just as he began with the universality of sin, so he ends with the universality of salvation. 'Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.' From beginning to end 'by grace are we saved through faith. It is the gift of God, in His kindness towards us through Jesus Christ' (Eph.).

Thus the order of ideas in Romans is: (*a*) Sin, its nature and origin. (*b*) God's Righteousness. (*c*) The one way of reconciliation with God. (*d*) The Christian Life, or practical application of what goes before.

We shall adopt this order, and deal with the leading topics under the following heads:—(1) *Man's Sin. Man's dual nature—Spirit and Flesh.* (2) *God, His Righteousness and Love.* (3) *Christ's Person and Work. His Spirit's gracious work in us: Calling, Faith, Justification, Sanctification, Glorification.* (4) *The Christian Life and the Christian Church.* (5) *Eschatology.*

The list is incomplete—*e.g.* we have chapters on Sonship and Predestination. Also, to avoid overmuch repetition (it is inevitable), some modification of the order may occur. For example, the Holy Spirit is treated earlier than it should be, so as to bring all Paul's allusions to 'spirit' into one chapter.

CHAPTER XIII

SIN

PAUL'S conception of sin is derived from two sources: (1) the Old Testament; (2) his own personal experience.

In Rom. v. 12-21 Paul gives us his reading of the Genesis story of the Fall. In Rom. vii. we have another account of sin, based upon deep reflection as well as on his own ripe experience.

We cannot spare either of these invaluable passages, but they are of interest to us for two totally different reasons. Rom. v. is deeply interesting mainly because it gives us such an excellent picture of the way in which the principles underlying the Genesis story of the Fall were interpreted in Paul's day. Rom. vii. absorbs our attention because it is the most penetrating analysis of the inner life that was ever penned. It is of undying value, written for all times and all peoples.

We shall take the two accounts in the order mentioned.

(A) *The conception of sin approached from the Rabbinical standpoint.*

Very fortunately, we possess a very considerable amount of contemporary Palestinian literature directly bearing on the problem of sin—*e.g.* 2 Esdras (80-85

A.D.); Baruch (150 B.C.-70 A.D.); Wisdom (50 B.C.-30 A.D.). We are thus able to compare Paul's views with contemporary Jewish thought on the same subject. Sanday and Headlam, in their notes on the Epistle to the Romans, rightly lay special stress on the close relationship of 2 Esdras to the line of thought in *Romans*. 2 Esdras is a late production, but it is essentially Jewish, and well reflects the Biblical doctrine of sin current among educated Jews in Paul's day. It is undoubtedly the finest discussion of the problem of evil in the whole range of Jewish literature. We shall therefore make no apology for quotations from it by way of comparison or illustration.

If the Cross is the corner-stone of the whole Pauline edifice of Redemption,[1] the fundamental conception of Paul's theology is that of sin. He makes it his starting-point, as we clearly see in his Epistle to the Romans. Both from a psychological point of view and as a matter of actual experience, Paul is on sure ground in beginning here.

He makes use of a large variety of terms to describe man's sinful disposition.[2] It is, however, only with three that we are here concerned—viz. 'sin' (*ἁμαρτία*); 'transgression' (*παράβασις*) and 'trespass' (*παράπτωμα*). Indeed, the two last named, 'transgression'

[1] 'The Cross is the trunk into which run up all the roots of Paul's Christian thought and that supports its branches and fruitage' (*Findlay*).

[2] *e.g.* *ἁμαρτία* ('sin'); *παράβασις* ('transgression'); *παράπτωμα* ('trespass'); *ἀνομία* ('iniquity'); *ἀσέβεια* ('ungodliness'); *ἀδικία* ('unrighteousness'); *ὀφείλημα* ('debt'). Other words for it are rather aspects of sin—*e.g.* 'falsehood,' 'darkness,' 'ignorance'—and do not come under this heading.

and 'trespass,' are so very closely allied that we can still further reduce Paul's terms to two: 'sin' and 'transgression.' But the distinction between the two is immeasurably greater than the English terms imply, for with us they are almost synonyms. If we would understand Paul at all in this matter we must, from the very outset, dissociate the word 'sin' from almost all the ideas that usually go with it nowadays. In Pauline theology 'sin' is a term of a very neutral tint, almost colourless, with practically no bad moral connotation at all.

For our immediate purpose we may define 'sin' (*ἁμαρτία*) as doing wrong without knowing that you are doing wrong. The idea that he is doing what he ought not to do does not enter into the man's consciousness. For instance, a cannibal is not conscious of wrong-doing when he eats a fellow-man. 'It is his nature to.' In Pauline phrase, he is only a 'sinner.'

'Transgression,' on the other hand, is what we should nowadays call *wilful* sin; doing wrong with your eyes open to the fact that you are doing what you ought not to do. A cannibal-Christian would be, in Pauline phrase, not a 'sinner,' but a 'transgressor.'

Now, Paul's whole contention is that from Adam to Moses men 'sinned,' but they did not 'transgress,' and for this reason. His one axiom is 'where there is no Law, there is no transgression,' and (on his Biblical view) the Law did not come in until Moses.

On this principle he divides the history of mankind into four ages or periods of spiritual evolution:—

(*a*) Adam to Abraham—the age of unconscious sin and great darkness.

(*b*) Abraham to Moses—still the age of 'sin,' but a Promise of Redemption has been given.

(*c*) Moses to Christ—the age of Law, 'our schoolmaster leading us unto Christ.'

(*d*) Christ to end of world—the age of the fulfilment of the Promise.

For our present purpose we may group (*a*) and (*b*) together, and call the period from Adam to Moses the age of the Patriarchs. According to Paul, this is the age of the childhood of the race, the happy period of half-innocence, when *transgression* is still unknown, simply because there were as yet no distinct commands of God to tell man: Thou shalt do this; Thou shalt not do that.

Then comes the age of Moses, and all is changed. On Mount Sinai, God gives Moses His Law with its many 'Thou shalts' and 'Thou shalt nots.' In His Law God plainly sets forth before men what acts they are to do and from what acts they are to refrain. From this day forth man can no longer say: I did wrong, but I did not know it was wrong. With the promulgation of the Law, acts of wrong-doing which before the days of Moses were merely 'sins' (*i.e.* unconscious and unintentional), and therefore not imputed unto men by God, now become 'transgressions,' deliberate and wilful trespasses. God holds man directly responsible for them, because these bad actions are now done in the full light and in open defiance of God's express commandment: 'Thou shalt not.'

This is the meaning of Rom. v.: 'For until the Law, sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no Law.' In the patriarchal age God could

not possibly call men's 'sins' transgressions. Therefore, as Acts xvii. 30 boldly puts it: 'The times of this ignorance God winked at.'[1]

We have said that from Adam to Moses there was 'sin' but no 'transgression.' This is not quite true. Paul admits that there was *one* transgression, Adam's. In his case there was an express command of God: '*Thou shalt not* eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.' Adam did eat of it in defiance of this plain command; he flew in the face of God's Law; therefore it was a case of wilful transgression.

With Adam's transgression 'sin entered into the world, and death by sin.' That is to say, Sin and Death (we must personify them) came into being at a given historical moment. Before that moment of Adam's Fall they were not. From that moment no man has ever been free from either, nor will be.

Curious as the idea seems to us, both Pauline theology and Jewish literature generally, from Genesis downwards, assure us that physical death is the natural consequence of sin. Sin and Death are not two unrelated things, but father and child, cause and effect.

That death followed man's disobedience of some god's direct command is a common primitive belief. With savage races it is a conviction that man was originally immortal, but he forfeited his immortality by breaking some law—some *taboo*—imposed by

[1] S. Paul does not hold these 'sinners' quite guiltless. They are in the same category as the Gentiles who have not 'the Law.' In Rom. ii. 12-15 Paul holds Gentiles partly responsible, because the natural law of reason and conscience, which all men have, was sufficient in itself to produce a sense of uneasiness and a consciousness of wrong.

deity, and death followed in consequence. Thus, in Australia, a woman had been forbidden to approach a certain tree in which dwelt a bat. She went near it. The bat fluttered out, and thereafter men died.

All Jews shared this belief that death came into the world as the universal lot of mankind in consequence of one man's disobedience of God's command—*e.g.* Ecclesiasticus xxv. 24: 'Of the woman came the beginning of sin, and through her we all die.' *Cf.* Wisdom ii. 23: 'For God created man to be immortal, and made him to be an image of his own eternity, nevertheless, through envy of the devil came death into the world.'

Science has discovered that death, no less than murder and adultery, reaches far beyond the beginning of the human race and is as old as the animal world itself. So as to harmonise Scripture with science, the 'death' of which the Bible speaks has been interpreted as a death of the soul. There is no doubt that Paul does eventually give 'death' an ethical and spiritual significance. None the less, like all Jews, he too starts with the conviction that *bodily* death is the fruit and penalty of sin in man, and in itself a proof of sin's universal sway.

'*By one man* came sin into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.'

This passage, Rom. v. 12, is one of the hardest sayings of Paul for the modern English reader to understand. It seems to contradict itself in one and the same breath. It first tells us that '*by one man* came sin into the world, and death by sin.' Then it

seems to go on to say that death is the result, not of *one* man's sin, but of *all* men's sins. At first sight its meaning seems to be perfectly clear: 'Adam died, because he sinned; we all of us die, because we also individually sin against God, exactly as he did.' What else, we ask, can the plain words mean: 'Death passed upon all men, *for that all have sinned*'?

This is so thoroughly in keeping with what we now think Paul ought to have said that we often make him say it. Yet he says nothing of the kind.

What Paul does say is that, immediately upon Adam's transgression, *there and then all mankind sinned*, and, as a natural consequence, Death came upon all men. Henceforth it claimed Adam and all born of his body as its own, irrespective of men's individual character.

The verses that follow, and the whole analogy between Adam and Christ, clearly prove that Paul means this and nothing else. In verses 13 and 14 Paul tells us that all men from Adam to Moses died, even though God could not strictly treat them as wilful sinners, because as yet there was no Law and they knew no better. 'For until the Law, sin was in the world, *but sin is not imputed where there is no Law. Nevertheless*, death reigned from Adam to Moses, *even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression.*' That is to say, after Adam men died, not because of their individual sins, but because of Adam's transgression. He and his race born of his body are one, and when he sinned all men sinned (ἥμαρτον, aorist, a single act performed at a given moment in past time).

That this is the meaning of 'for that all have sinned' (v. 12) is still further corroborated by the analogy between Adam and Christ. From first to last in Rom. v. the first Adam and the second Adam (Christ) are looked upon as exactly parallel types the one of the other: 'Adam, who is a figure of Him that is to come.' The one man does all the mischief, the other undoes it. The one brings into the world an era of sin, the other an era of sinlessness.

Exactly as Christ, the Man from heaven, is the Head and full representative of all mankind on the spirit side of man's nature, so precisely is Adam the head and full representative of all mankind on the flesh side. At the time of Adam's transgression we were all contained in his loins, and what he did then we one and all did with him there and then. It was MAN, not a man, who transgressed in the garden of Eden.

Between Adam and ourselves Paul sees the same oneness that he reveals between ourselves and Christ. What our representative, our head (be he Christ or Adam) is, we are; what he does, we do. Human history is already from the first summed up in these two; after-events only make it explicit. Only, in proportion as Christ is infinitely above Adam, so is His work to usward. 'If by one man's offence death reigned by one, much more doth the gift of righteousness, which is by one man, superabound.'

This is carrying out the idea of the unity and solidarity of the race with a vengeance, and from the moral point of view of this particular transaction of Adam's sin being visited on us all, Paul's views jar on us. Yet the solidarity of the race is a fact, if there is any truth

in the scientific doctrine of heredity. If so, the sins of the fathers *are* visited on the children.

Besides, the moral objectionableness of the idea would not strike a Jew as it does us. The idea of the individual being merged in his family, tribe or nation was so familiar to him in Old Testament history. Thus Achan's sin and the sin of Korah, Dathan and Abiram involve in their doom not only the guilty individuals themselves, but all their families as well, and all in any way associated with them. In the case of Achan, as with David afterwards, the whole nation has to pay the penalty of one man's sin.

No doubt a great deal of all this sounds very crude in our ears. So it is, but we must remember when and where Paul wrote it. True, he often transfigures the ideas of his day in this matter, and is far in advance of them. Still, he is hampered by the extremely literal interpretation of the Genesis story, which he shares in common with the Palestinian Jews of his generation.

Even twenty years after Paul, 2 Esdras echoes Paul's words—*e.g.* 'O thou Adam, what hast thou done? For though it was thou that sinned, thou art not fallen alone, but we all that come of thee' (2 Esd. vii. 48). 'For the grain of evil seed hath been sown in the heart of Adam from the beginning, and how much ungodliness hath it brought up unto this time! and how much shall it yet bring forth until the time of threshing come!' (iv. 30). The disease we have inherited from Adam is upon us all, the whole heart is sick, and there is no whole part in our body. 'An evil heart hath grown up in us and hath brought us into corruption and into the ways of death, and removed us far from life.'

ROMANS VII.

(B) *Paul's psychology of sin, based on his personal experience.*

If we would see Paul in all the beauty of his full strength, we must turn to Rom. vii., where he gives us a graphic sketch of man's inner life in its struggle with sin. The happy stage of man's unconsciousness of wrong, the first dawn of conscience, the awakening as from a dream to a sense of responsibility—all this he describes in a wondrously suggestive and beautiful word-picture. It is as true and profound an analysis of the inner life as man has ever done. Paul is here no longer content to follow in the steps of his Rabbinical teachers and dissect the text of the Old Testament with a minute anatomy. He probes right down into the innermost depths of the human heart and makes it reveal its secrets.

As Dr. Denney has well shown, although S. Paul speaks throughout Rom. vii. in the first person, the 'I' is more or less dramatic, for the sake of vividness, and it is humanity really that is speaking. Of course, the personal element cannot entirely be eliminated, the 'I' is too emphatic, too repeated, and the feeling is too deep. But in Rom. vii. Paul gives us not merely or mainly his own individual experience, but the universal experience of all mankind. It is Man, not a man, that here unbares his inmost heart-struggles. The 'I' that speaks is the *ego*, the real self, 'the immortal centre in us all where truth abides in fulness.'

It is a drama in three acts.

(1) Man in his state of natural innocence.

(2) The dawn of conscience.

(3) The struggle for the soul of man between the powers of evil and the powers of good.

(1) *Man in a state of natural innocence.*

The starting-point, 'I was alive without the Law once,' is, of course, purely ideal. There never was a golden age in Paul's or any other man's life, a happy period to which we can all look back, when we had no conscience, and therefore no bad conscience. It is partly true of *humanity*. There was a period in prehistoric times when man had no more sense of right and wrong than the animals around him, though it was not a golden age. But in the life of the *individual* we cannot thus fix a date when he was unconscious of right or wrong.

Paul, however, assumes this stage of happy unconsciousness of wrong in the individual as the starting-point of his spiritual life. Paul the Apostle, the ripe Christian, looks back upon man's unregenerate days through his own enlightened eyes and gives us an idealised sketch of the evolution of man's soul. He first places before us man in a state of nature, following his own sweet will and the dictates of his appetites, as unconscious of right or wrong as the animals around him. He has animal virtues and vices, but we can hardly speak of them as virtues or vices, for the 'knowledge of good and evil' is not yet his.

This is the state of nature Paul presupposes when, speaking in the name of humanity, he says: 'I was alive without the Law once.'

(2) *The dawn of conscience.*

Then comes the next step, the moment of all moments in man's spiritual evolution.

Paul describes it thus : 'I was alive without the Law once : but *when the commandment came*, sin revived, and I died.' These words go to the root of the whole matter, but, as they stand, they suggest next to nothing, they convey little or no vital meaning to the modern reader. We have to translate them into terms of modern experience. In order to do this with any thoroughness and profit to ourselves, we shall have to treat the whole passage with a certain amount of freedom. For instance, we are well aware that when Paul says 'the commandment came,' he is thinking of the Mosaic Law generally and the Ten Commandments in particular. None the less, we shall be adhering to his own line of argument equally truly, and we shall put the whole question at issue far more vividly before modern readers, if we here take 'commandment' or 'law' in the sense Paul attaches to it in Rom. ii. 14, 15 —*i.e.* the natural law of conscience which all men have written in their hearts.

'The commandment came, sin revived, and I died' will now mean something of this kind : Conscience, for the first time, made its voice heard, my bad actions stood before me in all their naked ugliness and my happy state of blissful ignorance and peace came to an end.

In the presence of his new-born moral sense man's eyes are suddenly opened to a knowledge of good and evil, a consciousness of right and wrong. Up to now he had been perfectly unconscious of his shortcomings, and hardly, if at all, responsible for them. 'He was naked, and not ashamed.' Now 'he knows that he is naked,' and he is ashamed. He awakes from his long

peaceful sleep with the shock of a terrible nightmare at the end of it still upon him.

Paul could not more vividly have portrayed the way in which the moral sense crosses the threshold of consciousness than by his two word-pictures, 'The commandment came,' 'sin revived, and I died.'

'The commandment came.' As always with the workings of the Holy Spirit, He comes to us no man can tell whence or how (S. John iii. 8). He comes to us from somewhere outside ourselves. At all times this has been the impression left on man's mind when suddenly confronted by some new and startling revelation. At such a moment he distinctly hears a voice from outside speaking to him. Thus Eve hears voices in Eden saying to her: 'Eat, and ye shall be gods'; 'but God hath said, Thou shalt not eat of it.' We all know how, at critical moments of his life, Socrates was fully convinced he heard supernatural voices warning him not to do this or that.

Equally true to life are Paul's words: 'Sin revived,[1] and I died.' Man's conscience first makes itself felt as a *bad* accusing conscience. 'The commandment came,' the Law of God stands before him, and he instantly feels like a prisoner at the bar, with the Law (conscience) convicting him of this, that and the other sin past and present, and passing sentence of death upon him accordingly.

(3) *The inner struggle.*

We now enter on the third act in the drama of the spiritual evolution of man's soul. Two mutually antagonistic powers, the 'flesh' and the 'spirit,' now

[1] *i.e.* it had been there all the while, but latent.

contend for man's soul. They stand over man, who is as it were placed between them as the prize of the strife, and they fight for the mastery. He is not a mere passive spectator in this fight of life and death to him. Sometimes he sides with the flesh, sometimes with the spirit, and when he follows either of them he is promptly attacked by the other.

In other words man, with his new moral sense now fully alive within him, awakens to the fact that he is a twofold personality, half-god and half-animal. One half of himself is a bundle of lusts and appetites insisting on their own indulgence, the other half hates this sensuous life, and rebels against it actively.[1]

The Law of God says: Thou shalt not kill, nor lust, nor steal. Unregenerate man in past days has done every single one of these bad actions over and over again unwittingly. Now his new conscience tells him that the Law of God is right: 'For I delight in the Law of God after the inward man.' But he did these things before he knew the Law of God, and only awakes to their badness when it is too late. The mischief is already done. He has sown to the flesh, and he must reap to the flesh. The fact that he did these bad things in the past perfectly unwittingly, and that therefore they are not really *his*, does not save him in the least from their consequences, apparently.

This is the newly-awakened man's first problem, and here is another still stranger and more perplexing. Even now that he knows what he ought to do and not

[1] Of course, this is not a perfectly true picture of Paul's 'flesh and spirit' (see next chapter). We are putting it here very roughly in modern phrase.

to do, 'delighting in the Law of God after the inward man,' he discovers that there is a power[1] within him pulling him with all its might in the direction of what is wrong. 'What I would that do I not; but what I hate that do I.' Worse still, he soon finds that when the Law of God says 'Do not,' this mysterious bad power within him prompts him to say 'I will.'

Thus, on the very threshold of his new life, regenerate man finds himself face to face with these stupendous problems :—

(1) There are two personalities in me: (*a*) a good self that delights in the holy, just and good Law of God, and longs to do its bidding; (*b*) a bad self that wilfully flies in the face of the Law of God and forces me to do the evil I hate.[2]

Which of these two is 'I'? Am I to identify myself with my higher self, of which I thoroughly approve in my heart of hearts, or with my lower self, which I inwardly loathe?

(2) I know that the Law is 'holy and just and good,' and so are its 'Thou shalts' and 'Thou shalt nots.' It is there for my good and to quicken me into life. Why then does it, as a matter of fact, do the very reverse? It does not make me good. It only seems

[1] Sin in the flesh is constantly personified in Paul—*e.g.* it dwells in men (Rom. vii. 20), reigns over them as a lord (v. 21; vi. 12-14), has men as his slaves (vi. 13, 17; vii. 14), pays them wages (vi. 23); imposes its Law on them (vii. 23, 25; viii. 2), shuts them up in prison (Gal. iii. 22).

[2] According to Paul (see next chapter) sin dwells in the flesh, good dwells in the νοῦς, 'the inner man,' the mind, man's *natural* highest faculty to which the Law of God appeals, though, in believers, the 'spirit' is far higher still (1 Cor. xiv. 14, 15). The νοῦς can become bad as well as good.

to stimulate me to sin the more: 'For I had not known lust except the Law had said, Thou shalt not covet.' How is it that God's good Law makes me bad? 'Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid!' It cannot be, but what does it all mean?

How does Paul answer these two hard questions? We shall take the second first.

Paul says that the Law has a good purpose, but his explanation is one of the most paradoxical and daring utterances in the whole Bible. 'The Law was given that sin by the commandment might become exceedingly sinful.' That is to say, the sole aim and purpose of the Law is to show up sin to men in all its blackness, as the vile and ugly thing that it is, so that they may hate it and turn away from it. The Law was never meant to bring salvation; it cannot do that. It was given to pave the way for Christ, 'as our schoolmaster leading us unto Christ.' This it does by bringing men to the verge of despair, showing them the hopelessness of trying to work out a goodness of their own, and so forcing them to accept it as the gift of God through Christ.

Paul goes on to say that although the Law works in this paradoxical way and God meant it so to do, yet the blame lies neither at the door of God nor of His good and holy Law. If there were between man's higher and lower self, the spirit and the flesh, that true harmony which constitutes the true man, the effect of the Law would not be what it actually is. The whole blame lies with man himself whose sin has thrown his whole being out of gear, so that the flesh, with sin dwelling in it, has now got the upper hand. 'For we

know that the Law is holy and good and spiritual, but *I* am carnal, sold under sin.'[1]

With this clue in his hand Paul can now give us the solution of our first problem: Which is my real I—the flesh or the spirit? His answer is: The real I in me is the 'I' that delights in the Law of God after the inward man. As for the bad acts of my lower self, both past and present, 'I allow them not.' 'If then I do that I would not, *I* consent unto the Law, that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.'

This is bold teaching, and Paul may here seem to be treading on slippery ground, but we shall see his meaning more clearly when we come to deal with his views on 'flesh and spirit' in the next chapter.

This much we may say now. Is it not true of each one of us that 'I am I and yet not I'? Is there not much of our nature for which we are not responsible, for we have inherited it in spite of ourselves? If the scientific doctrine of heredity proves anything, it is the great fact of the solidarity of mankind. When we consider whence we came and where we are, our ancestry and our environment, is it not true that man is free, yet never free, to choose his own path, for it has in a measure been determined for him? Does not Paul's agonising cry, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' and his answer to it—do not both find a responsive echo in our own hearts?

Be this as it may, Paul finds himself in Rom. vii.

[1] *i.e.* the Law is good and holy, yet it is provocative of sin, because our 'flesh' is the seat of sin (see next chapter), and therefore our nature is so constituted that the Law produces the reverse of what the Law really intended (vii. 13, 14).

face to face with the self-same problem that confronted him in Rom. v.—the old Adam in us—though he has come to it by two totally different roads. From the psychological as from the Biblical standpoint, he discovers that man's animal nature has to be reckoned with. We shall see that there is no Manichæism in Paul. He nowhere says that our flesh is inherently bad ;[1] but he does say that, since the Fall, its appetites have got out of hand and must be brought into subjection to and harmony with our higher nature. 'I am carnal, sold under sin.'

Here Paul is on the sure ground of universal experience. In man as we all know him the 'flesh' is not harmonised to the 'spirit.' 'In some way or other,' says Bishop Wilson, 'every man is conscious of an opposition in him between the flesh and the spirit.' Horace of old said the same thing: '*Video meliora proboque ; deteriora sequor.*' Science to-day fully bears out Paul. It tells us as a fact that there is an animal strain in us all which we inherit from our long animal ancestry, and take it into account we must.[2]

[1] He denies the presence of evil in Christ, 'who knew no sin,' yet Christ was a partaker of our fleshly nature. This in itself is conclusive proof that 'flesh' and sinlessness are not incompatible. Sin, though dwelling in the flesh, is really something outside the flesh. The flesh is not *per se* sinful.

[2] Where science quarrels with Paul is in the matter of the Fall, which it does not admit. In the first place, science denies the origin of the human race from *one single pair*. It asserts that mankind has sprung from several such pairs. Secondly, it maintains that all along, from the very lowest forms of animal or even vegetable life, right up to man, the development has been on an ascending scale, and, as God meant it, along the best conceivable lines, for modern science is becoming more and more teleological. Evolution, according to science, has never had such a set-back as the Fall implies. What is called the Fall was a necessary stage in the transition from the state of nature to the state of culture.

CHAPTER XIV

THE FLESH

WHAT does Paul mean by 'the flesh'? On no other point of Pauline theology, probably, is there such diversity of opinion.

It may help to throw some light on what we have to say, if we pave the way with a rapid general sketch of Paul's view of the flesh and its evil proclivities, and then give some account of his psychology.

To proceed in this order is to put the cart before the horse, reversing the logical order of things, but it will serve two ends. It may make our meaning clearer, and we shall be glad to put the Pauline psychology last, for it is a dry subject.

In Paul's day there was a Greek school of thought which looked upon the flesh and all matter as inherently evil, while the Hebrews as a race regarded the human body with the greatest reverence. Was Paul a Greek or a Hebrew in this matter? We know that he calls himself a Hebrew of the Hebrews, but he had also for over twenty years been in touch with the Greek-speaking world. Indeed, Lightfoot has convincingly shown that Paul directly or indirectly drew largely from Stoic philosophy, was acquainted with classical Greek quotations, borrowed largely from

the language of Greek mysteries, and had at least a smattering of Alexandrian philosophy.[1]

One modern school insists that in the matter of 'the flesh' Paul has distinctly come under the influence of Greek thought and shares the Greek view of the flesh as essentially and inherently evil. Refined intellectual Greeks looked upon all matter as bad and impure, and therefore regarded the body of flesh as the soul's prison-house, and the source of all that is bad in us. In their eyes, the flesh clogs the pure reason and hampers the evolution of our higher self. The one consummation devoutly to be desired, therefore, is the deliverance of the soul from the foul prison-house of this burdensome body of flesh.

It would be idle to deny that Paul, in innumerable passages, teaches practically the same doctrine. 'In me, that is my flesh, dwelleth no good thing' (Rom. vii. 18). 'O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' (vii. 24). 'Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would' (Gal. v. 16-17). 'For we that are in this tabernacle (=body of flesh) do groan, being burdened, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens' (*i.e.* a spirit-body free from all flesh) (2 Cor. v. 1-4).

[1] In chapter ii. we have given our reasons for believing that Paul's knowledge of Greek literature and philosophy was very superficial, and that there is more than appears on the surface in the contemptuous epithet applied to him by intellectual Athenians, σπερμολόγος, 'a picker up of learning's crumbs.'

No Greek could have given expression to his own views in more emphatic words. Paul even out-Greeks the Greeks. He has something in him of the Hindoo ascetic, 'I buffet (lit. bruise it with blows, mortify) my body, and bring it into bondage, lest by any means I myself should be rejected.' He urges his converts to mortify the flesh and put it to death (*cf.* Rom. viii. 13; Col iii. 5; 1 Cor. v. 5; ix. 27; 2 Cor. iv. 10-11). We must kill it, or it will kill us.

On the other hand, there is another and larger set of scholars who as emphatically deny that Paul ever came under the influence of Greek thought in this matter at all. They maintain that there is very little asceticism, in the ordinary sense, in Paul's Epistles, and that although there is undoubtedly some depreciation of the flesh, there is much more that makes in exactly the opposite direction. Such a view of the body as inherently evil is as un-Hebrew as can be, while Paul was a Hebrew of the Hebrews. All his sympathies, say they, are with the Old Testament prophets and psalmists and not at all with Alexandrian or any other Greek philosophers. Even where he seems to share Greek views, he arrived at their conclusions by a totally different road of his own.

In its main contention this school is undoubtedly in the right. There are only three root-factors in Paul's theology: (1) the Old Testament; (2) a leaven of his old Rabbinic theology; (3) his own Christian heart-experience.

It may sound a strange thing to say in the face of the array of texts to the contrary just quoted, but Paul at heart does not endorse the Manichæan view

of the flesh as inherently evil. We shall presently see why. For the moment, we can appeal to two conclusive proofs to show that, as a matter of fact, Paul did not think or say that flesh and sin must needs go hand in hand. (*a*) Christ 'knew no sin,' yet He 'was made flesh' (Rom. i. 3 and viii. 3[1]). (*b*) Paul speaks of *sinful* evil spirits, yet they have no flesh, but sin is present in them all the same.

In true Hebrew fashion, far from disparaging the human body, Paul shares all the Jew's reverence for it. In 1 Cor. vi. 13 he emphatically insists on its sacredness: 'The body is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.' 'Know ye not that your body is the member of Christ, the temple of the Holy Ghost, therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.' 'I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and may the God of peace sanctify you wholly' (*i.e.* sanctify your body *as well as* your soul and spirit). 'Cleanse yourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness.'

In all this Paul tells us that our body is holy—meant to be holy—and we can make it holy. On the same principle, till quite late in life, Paul insisted on the traditional Jewish view of the resurrection of the body which we now wear, as an essential article of his Christian creed. It was to be a changed, glorious, transfigured body, but still the same. True, in

[1] Rom. viii. 3 may be said not to make for us, since it says: 'In the *likeness* of sinful flesh'; but see chapter xviii., 'Christ's real Humanity.' Christ really took our flesh upon Him and yet remained sinless, thus showing Sin to be a usurper in taking up his abode in it. He took our flesh, but conquered and expelled from it Sin the usurper and interloper.

2 Cor. v. he gives up this idea of our taking our earthly body with us when we die. He is now confident that our spirit-body,[1] 'a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens,' is awaiting us there. But from first to last Paul the Hebrew could never for one moment contemplate the idea of our rising after death as 'naked' bodiless souls.

Now, how are we to harmonise these apparently self-contradictory views of Paul? At one moment he speaks of our flesh with all the depreciation of the human body that would gladden the heart of a Greek metaphysician. 'O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' The next moment he calls it a 'member of Christ,' 'the temple of the Holy Ghost' which we are to sanctify and preserve blameless till our Lord appears, for we shall take it with us. Here he equals any Jew in his reverence for the human body.

How reconcile these apparently irreconcilable statements? An easy way out of the difficulty is one that has suggested itself to many scholars. Paul, they say, did not theorise. He had elaborated no final cut-and-dried system of his own concerning the flesh, such as speculative minds love. He was a practical man, and contented himself with simply stating facts as they presented themselves to him in actual experience, without troubling himself about any objections that pedants may raise on the score of their

[1] A spirit-body seems to us a contradiction in terms. But to a Jew 'spirit' itself was a kind of thin, subtle, luminous matter, like air or ether. Paul can only vaguely describe it from what he saw of Christ in his vision at the Conversion.

inconsistency. Both his views are true to life, so he lets them both stand harmlessly side by side, without any thought of their essential inconsistency, much less any attempt to reconcile them.

This sounds plausible, but is it true? Paul was nothing if not a born psychologist. No man has ever analysed the inner life with a more penetrating and graphic touch than Paul in Rom. vii. We shall see that Paul had thought and thought long and profoundly on the subject of sin and the flesh, and that he has very clearly defined views on the subject. We are too apt to forget that when Paul speaks of the 'body' and also of 'sinful flesh' the two terms are not as convertible as we fancy.

It is not Paul who contradicts himself; it is his interpreters who make him do so. Paul would and does tell us 'flesh' and 'sinful flesh' are two totally different things. The qualifying epithet makes all the difference in the world.

His own heart-experience told him, as ours tells us, that as a matter of fact, in man as we actually know him, 'the flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh, for these are contrary the one to the other.' Even the Hebrew writers of the Old Testament, with all their reverence for the body, knew that. Constantly do they employ the term 'flesh' to denote human frailty. For instance, in Ps. lxxviii. 39, God remembers that 'men are but flesh.' Here we are already on the very threshold of Paul's use of the word 'flesh' as the seat of sin.

In looking upon the flesh of the sons of Adam as a hindrance to a good and holy life, Paul is perfectly at

one with Greeks, Englishmen and all thinking men at all times and all the world over, and here he is on sure ground. The universal experience of mankind makes man aware of the unhappy fact that simply because we have a body of flesh which is a bundle of animal appetites, therefore we are all of us ever rushing into temptation and falling into sin. The undying savage is very much alive in us all. There is no abstruse doctrine in Paul's 'I know that in me, that is my flesh, dwelleth no good thing,' only the Apostle's living experience assuring us that saintly Paul was a man of like passions with ourselves.

Paul shares the Greek view of the 'flesh' simply because he knew human nature. But this does not in any way preclude him from sharing the Jew's reverence for the body, and rising even far beyond it. Put in a nutshell, Paul's view is this; Flesh as we know it is one thing; flesh as it is in itself, and as we can make it, is quite another. At present it is true that sin dwells in our flesh, but this is an unnatural state of things, and God does not mean it to continue, and it need not. Sin is as distinct and divorcible from the flesh as is the worm from the apple it has made its home (Rom. vii. 18 *sqq.*).

Let us state Paul's view in fuller detail. In man as we see him, says Hebrew Paul, we see human nature out of gear. When he left the hand of God he was sinless and immortal. Every part of his nature blended in perfect unison and worked in absolute harmony, so that there was perfect health of body and rightness of life and character. Somehow Adam wittingly committed a trespass, a false step, commonly

called the Fall. At once Sin, a malignant demonic power outside man, was let loose upon him by Satan, seized him, 'possessed' his flesh even as an evil spirit enters a demoniac, and made man's flesh his home.[1]

Through Sin's entrance into the flesh it became tainted, and physical death followed as a natural consequence. Not in Adam only, but in all his posterity (Rom. v.). From a bad Adam comes a bad stock in all generations. 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one' (Job xiv. 14). 'Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me' (Ps. li. 5). In Adam all men sinned, and in Adam all die. But it is not the flesh in itself that is bad and to blame. It is Sin, dwelling in the flesh, that does all the mischief.

Man's nature after as before the Fall is the same, *plus* one new factor. A new power, Sin, now dwells in the flesh. But this makes all the difference in the world. Before the Fall the Spirit gave the flesh, its servant, its orders, and the flesh obeyed and did its work well. The same call is now made upon the flesh to do its part, but it cannot possibly respond to the call as before. It is no longer its own master. The new demon-power, Sin, now dwells in it, and the flesh is his slave. Sin is now master where Spirit ruled before. The 'spirit,' 'I' or 'inward man' (Rom. vii. 22) may be all right, but it can only act in finite beings through the flesh—*i.e.* the members of the body must execute its orders. But they cannot. However

[1] As we have seen, Paul personifies Sin—*e.g.* he dwells in men, reigns over them as lord, uses them as his slaves, pays them wages, imposes his laws upon them, shuts them up in prison.

excellent may be the orders issued by the 'I' to the flesh, it is Sin who sees these orders carried out by the flesh, his slave. Naturally, he gets his own servant to do his work in his own way, and this is a bad way, in spite of the protests of the inner man. Hence S. Paul's 'Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but Sin that dwelleth in me. For I delight in the Law of God after the inward man' (Rom. vii. 20).

In this passage (Rom. vii. 18 *sqq.*) Paul lays his finger on four different elements present in our human nature.

(*a*) *Sin* dwells in the flesh, but is not the flesh. It is as distinct from it as is the worm from the apple it has made its home.

(*b*) *Flesh*, the abode of sin, but in itself it is no more sin than the apple is the worm.

(*c*) *Righteousness* (=the Law of God), Sin's rival, also dwells in us in the 'inward man' (ἔσω ἄνθρωπος = νοῦς), just as sin dwells in the flesh.

(*d*) The '*inward man*,' 'I,' both the home of 'good' and on its side.

So we get the picture of man's body as one whole, consisting of 'flesh' + 'inward man.' Sin dwelling in the flesh, and working through it, pulls man in one direction; the Law of God, working through the 'mind,' pulls him in the opposite direction.

Man's nature is thus the arena on which the powers of evil and the powers of good struggle for man's possession in a perpetual tug-of-war. They stand over him, and each claims him as his prize. If he sides with either, the other fiercely attacks him.

From this rapid sketch of Paul's view of the flesh we

can see how he can at one and the same time be a Greek and a Hebrew, take a pessimistic and an optimistic view of it, depreciate the sinful flesh yet reverence the body.

But, it will be asked, are not the flesh and the body one and the same? Yes and No. The flesh is the flesh and blood and bones, the earthly, corruptible, living material of which our body is in part composed, the present seat of sin. But the body is more than flesh, as we shall presently see. In Paul's psychology body is the whole man, flesh + soul + spirit.

In so far as our body consists of material flesh, which Sin has made its home, the body is carnal, not because the flesh is inherently evil, but because it is 'sold under sin.' This is the 'body of death' from which Paul prays to be delivered.

In so far as the body is also the dwelling-place of the heavenly Spirit, the 'I,' or 'inward man which delights in the Law of God,' it is holy, 'the member of Christ,' 'the temple of the Holy Ghost,' and we can and do 'glorify' God with it.

This all sounds very quaint and unreal to the modern man. He feels like a stranger in a strange land. However living the question of 'original sin' may have been to the men of long ago, to him it is a mere fiction, an issue that is dead. No, it is nothing of the kind. It is with us now, only science calls it 'inherited tendency,' the influence of our animal and savage ancestry in the life and character of the individual. The root-facts of 'original sin' and 'inherited tendency' are one and the same. It is only

the phrase which in the one case stifles and in the other stimulates our interest to-day.

Now, as in Paul's day, science speaks of 'sin dwelling in our flesh,' only it calls the bad strain by another name. It is a live issue of vital interest now.

So it is exactly with Paul's other phrase: 'I delight in the Law of God after the inward man.'

Here again Paul steps down into the arena of man's actual life and deals with an issue which is very much with us and alive to-day; never more so. Science itself cannot ignore it, for it has to do with things as they are, and conscience, our moral sense—call it what you will—is a real fact, the highest and greatest fact of our actual experience. Explain its origin as we may, there is a 'law written in our hearts' which enables us to know right from wrong, good from evil. Every moment it invites, persuades us to choose the good and eschew the bad. By its light our minds refuse to conceive a time when falsehood would be good or truthfulness bad, and we see that the laws of goodness are right and true laws and as eternal as the laws of mathematics. We also know that these eternal laws reward of themselves and punish of themselves, so that on our harmony with these eternal laws of goodness or our disharmony with them depends our happiness or misery, our life or death. So when Paul bids us be true to our higher self and seek after 'love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control,' he carries us along with him, and science endorses his plea.

Once more, Paul tells us that the present anarchy between the flesh and the spirit, our lower and higher

nature, is an unnatural state of things, and not the goal God intends for us. Here again science is on the side of Paul. It may not echo Paul's words of a Golden Age in the far-away past, but it is as sure as Paul that there is a better future in front of us. We are all evolutionists now, and, say what we will, we are ever moving forward. In our intercourse with our fellows there is growing up with wondrous rapidity a sense of the brotherhood and solidarity of man, and there is a far keener sense of justice, fairness and loving-kindness than ever before. The 'works of the flesh' are still with us, but there is nothing like the drunkenness or brutality of even fifty years ago. We realise now that, although it is no easy task to harmonise the spirit and the flesh so that the flesh may no longer lust against the spirit, the thing can be done. We do not say that the flesh is inherently bad. All the instincts in us are innocent in themselves. They are there at the service of our higher nature to obey its beck and call. They only become sinful when we allow them to get out of hand and go dead against the prompting of conscience. Then they become what Paul admirably calls 'inordinate affections,' and the flesh, the best of servants, turns into the worst of masters. Both on physical and moral grounds, man is daily learning more and more to harmonise the spirit and the flesh, and drawing nearer to his final God-appointed goal.

But though 'the thoughts of men must thus widen with the process of the suns,' Paul is right in saying that, try as he will, man will never save himself. He must link himself to God for that, and get the Christ-

Spirit,[1] or else, as Paul found by sad personal experience, he will have to write over all his life-work the one word: Failure. But we are anticipating the subject of our next chapter.

Paul's Psychology

To return to Paul and the flesh. Where did Paul borrow his psychology, his quaint conception of man's twofold nature, with each part of this dual personality the home of a foreign power?

Exactly as he arrived at his conception of sin. In each case his conclusions are a blend of profound reflection on Old Testament truths and his own personal experience.[2] If we would grasp Paul's conception of body, soul and spirit, it is to Genesis we must go for the key. In 1 Cor. xv. 45 Paul openly tells us he has borrowed his own psychology from the Old Testament. His terms 'flesh,' 'soul,' 'spirit,' 'heart' are taken straight out of it.

(a) *Soul.* The postulate which lies at the very basis

[1] We are fully persuaded that not evolution, nor anything short of the ideals Christ set before us, has renovated the world. Darwin truly says: 'The habit of thought transforms the physical habit'; and it is because Christ has taught men to 'set their thoughts on things above,' and persuaded men to strive daily towards the highest and the best, that the world is so much better since He came. His Spirit has remodelled the race. *Cf.* Gwatkin, *Early Church History*, pp. 1-3; 13 *sqq.*

[2] The whole religious world of thought in which Paul the Pharisee had lived, in which he had taken root with all the fibres of his soul, was bound up in the Old Testament. True, Paul's theology is based far more on experience than theory. But all through his system of doctrine we cannot fail to see unmistakable traces that his views are the outcome of profound reflection on the Old Testament. Here, for instance, Genesis gave him certain root-facts on human nature, and he had to base his own convictions thereon.

of Paul's psychology, 'The first Adam was made a living soul,' is taken bodily from Gen. ii. 7. There we must go for Paul's definition of 'soul.' Gen. ii. 7 reads: 'The Lord formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.'

Here 'soul' has nothing whatever to do with our idea of an immortal soul. 'Man became a living soul' simply means that he became a living body. So much so that the Old Testament frequently calls a corpse a 'dead soul.'

(b) *Spirit.* In Gen. ii. 7 the spirit (=God's breath) comes straight from God, enters man's body, and its presence there is the cause of his life or 'soul.' Clearly, then, the spirit stands to the soul in the relation of cause and effect. As soon as God's Spirit comes, we live; when it goes, we die. 'Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit, they are created; Thou takest away their breath (spirit), they die' (Ps. civ. 29, 30). We can therefore define spirit as the life-giving principle proceeding direct from God, while the 'soul' or life is the result of its presence in us.

Here we already have, *in the making*, Paul's own idea and definition of the spirit as the life-giver (πνεῦμα ζωοποιοῦν). 'The first Adam was made a living soul (ψυχὴ ζῶσα), the second Adam a quickening spirit.'

If we bear in mind Paul's consistent distinction between 'soul' and 'spirit,' it will make many startling expressions clear. Thus Paul tells us that a body carried to the grave is a dead *soul* (ψυχικόν), while the resurrection-body is a spirit-body (πνευματικόν). Simi-

larly, man in his natural unregenerate state is 'soulish,' the regenerate Christian is 'spiritual.'

It is precisely because Paul lays so much stress on the distinction between 'soul' and 'spirit,' while other Biblical writers use the words as synonymous, that it is the rule nowadays to speak of Paul's trichotomy (threefold division) over against the dichotomy (twofold division) of the rest of Scripture. As a matter of fact, he only gives explicit expression to what was implicit in Genesis all along.

We have already alluded to one other fact we must not overlook. All through the Bible man is regarded as an indivisible whole. The body is not the man; the soul is not the man; but both together. This is why a Jew never could separate the two. If he was to rise after death, it was inconceivable to him that there could be any resurrection at all unless a resurrection of the body went with it.

To sum up. God's Spirit enters our body and makes it a 'living soul.' Flesh + soul + spirit = man.

Paul not only adopts the Bible terms 'flesh,' 'soul,' 'spirit'; as always, he goes a step farther and gives them a moral significance.

Because flesh in man is now always flesh + sin, since Adam's Fall, flesh is always spoken of by Paul as *sinful* flesh.

As we have seen, flesh and spirit become, in Paul, two antagonistic principles. We either sow to the flesh or walk in the spirit. 'This I say, walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. The works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery,

fornication, uncleanness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred,' etc. 'But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace,' etc.

A glance at this list shows that Paul includes among fleshly sins many which we should not now call 'sins of the flesh'—*e.g.* hatred, idolatry, heresies. This is because, with Paul, the flesh 'sold under sin' is the dominant partner in man and rules all his faculties. The form its sins assume depends altogether on the organ or faculty it seizes. If it works through the bodily members, then we get sensual sins—*e.g.* adultery. If the mind (*νοῦς*) is the faculty seized, we get sins of thought, and as this is the faculty which 'delights in the Law of God,' its perversion brings with it sins of irreligion and unbelief—*e.g.* idolatry, witchcraft, heresies. Similarly, sins of the 'heart' involve corrupt feelings—*e.g.* envyings, hatred, strife. Even the 'spirit' can thus be defiled (2 Cor. vii. 1).

Once more, since 'flesh' stands for what is material and earthly in us, Paul brands all materialistic aspects of life and all externalism in religion as 'fleshly.' Thus Judaism, with all its outward observances, is 'fleshly,' for true 'circumcision is of the heart, not that which is outward in the flesh' (Rom. ii. 28). Jews are only 'fleshly' sons of Abraham, because they are only like him in body, not in the spirit (Rom. ix. 7-8). Ishmael is Abraham's fleshly son, Isaac his spiritual son (Gal. iv. 29). There is even a knowledge of Christ which is 'fleshly,' for it is possible to have known Him all the time He was here on earth, to be acquainted with the minutest details of His life and teaching, and yet know little or nothing of His inner spirit (2 Cor. v. 16).

CHAPTER XV

THE SPIRIT

'SPIRIT,' in Pauline theology, is an ambiguous term, for he uses the same word in three different senses.

(*A*) The human spirit which belongs to every 'natural' man, regenerate and unregenerate alike.

(*B*) The spirit which belongs only to the regenerate; the faculty in us through which the Holy Spirit works.

(*C*) The Holy Spirit.

[(A) *The purely human spirit.*

We have bracketed the whole of this section, because it only incidentally bears upon the main subject of this chapter. The question is one of great interest to the student, but more speculative than practical.

According to Paul, every man on earth has a 'spirit' within him, but it is of a very neutral tint, and must be carefully distinguished from the Christian spirit, which is none other than the Holy Spirit of Christ indwelling in us. Several passages in Paul prove the existence of the purely human spirit.

For instance: 'What man knoweth the things of a man, save *the spirit of man* which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God' (1 Cor. ii. 11).

Unlike the Christian spirit, the 'natural' spirit may be defiled: 'Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit' (2 Cor. vii. 1). 'That your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless' (1 Thess. v. 23). It needs consolation and rest: 'They have refreshed my spirit and yours' (1 Cor. xvi. 18). 'I had no rest in my spirit' (2 Cor. ii. 13). It may even be eternally lost: 'That the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord' (1 Cor. v. 5).

Thus the natural spirit is weak, capable of suffering and defilement, and may even be eternally lost. Its weakness has to be strengthened, its defilement and ruin prevented by the purifying influence of the Christian spirit, which is not liable to weakness, defilement or perdition, but is essentially strong, pure, undying, life-giving.

The natural spirit seems to be the neutral ground between the rival camps of the 'flesh' and the 'Christian spirit' in us, and liable to be claimed by either side. It has little or no moral or religious colouring to start with. Hence, when Paul wants to speak of that higher faculty in all men which 'delights in the Law of God,' even in the heathen, he carefully avoids calling it the 'spirit of man.' He calls it the inward man or 'mind' (ἔσω ἄνθρωπος, νοῦς).

The gulf is so great between the unregenerate and regenerate 'spirit' in S. Paul that many leading theologians refuse to see any connection between them. Others more consistently maintain that the 'natural spirit' is the 'Christian spirit' undeveloped. That is to say, the natural spirit is really the organ through which the Holy Spirit works, but till the advent of the

Spirit of Christ in a man's heart, the human spirit is 'even as ears in a soundless world.' As soon as 'the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God' it awakes from its torpor into real activity.]

(B) *The Christian spirit.*

Here Paul leaves on one side all questions of mere theoretical psychology and gives us the ripe fruit of his own living experience. On this solemn theme his utterances are based upon direct personal knowledge of what has taken place in his own heart.

Before his conversion, as we saw, he had found the flesh too strong for him. 'O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' (Rom. vii.). As soon as God revealed His Son *in* him (not *to* him), and 'sent forth the Spirit of His Son into his heart,' Paul at once experienced a wondrous change in himself. The flesh was conquered! He was its master, no longer its slave.

Who had worked this miracle? Not he. Christ's Spirit within him had done it all. 'I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.' The same Christ Who had taken our flesh upon Him and by His Spirit made it sinless, had enabled Paul to do the same thing through His Spirit indwelling in him.

All along, even before his conversion, Paul's 'inner man' had rebelled against the thraldom of sinful flesh, but to no avail. Sin, dwelling in the flesh, had made his servant, the flesh, do his work in his own way, in spite of all the protests of Paul's inward man. Now all this is changed. The inner man now no longer

copes ineffectually with sinful flesh. 'Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.'

The Spirit of Christ now in him, this and nothing else has worked the miraculous change in Paul. And no wonder, for has he not now in him the heavenly, pure, strong, undying, life-giving Holy Spirit which constitutes the very essence of God and His Christ? Where this Spirit is, *there* is also life, purity, health. Everything that is good springs into active life; all that is bad vanishes as the gloom before the sun's rays. The Spirit of Christ indwelling in us takes possession of the whole man. It purifies the feelings of the heart, strengthens the will, renews and quickens the spirit so that the inner man now not only delights in the Law of God, but is fully able to live up to it. Not unto us be the praise, 'for it is God who worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure.'

The flesh is still with us, it always will be on this side of the grave, but now as our slave, not our master. True, so long as it remains alive, the flesh is a standing menace to our Christian life. Christ has laid hold on us ('apprehended' us), and His Spirit is ours now, but He can only lay hold on us so long as we cling to Him too. If we are not very careful, spiritual as we now are we may, through our own fault, lose our hold on Christ and fall back into the old bondage of the flesh. But this cannot happen unless we wilfully sever our union with Christ and again deliberately join hands with the flesh. For Paul asserts as emphatically as our Lord that a man cannot possibly serve two masters (Rom. viii. 6-9; 1 Cor. x. 21). The 'Spirit' of Christ will not

abide in such a double-minded man, and if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His.

This is the Christian spirit. Paul *knew* it was actually indwelling in himself, and he could not fail to see it indwelling in others. It was a patent fact. In all believers around him he saw 'love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control,' the 'fruits of the Spirit' manifest in their daily lives.

Here, then, we have the keynote to Paul's whole gospel. He is convinced that Christ saves men by Himself actually entering into men's hearts and taking up His abode with them. This mystical union with Christ is so close and intimate that Paul can find no terms adequate to give it proper expression (*cf.* 1 Thess. v. 10; Rom. vi. 4-8; 1 Cor. i. 9). He loves to describe it as 'I am in Christ and Christ in me,' or 'I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.' The Christian's own life is as it were absorbed and taken up in the life of Christ. 'To me to live is Christ.' Not that the man's personality has been destroyed, but the Spirit of Christ now takes the place that the flesh did of old.

This oneness between Christ and the believer is to Paul no mere figure of speech. It is a real solid fact. The Christian and Christ, the second Adam, are as really and truly one as natural man is one with the first Adam.

By virtue of this oneness with Christ, all He has done we have done, all He is we are. We died with Him on the Cross, and there crucified our flesh. With Him we rose from the grave to newness of life; we have ascended with Him into heaven, and are even here

and now living the heavenly spiritual life.[1] Even now on earth we are daily casting off more and more the 'outward man, while the inward man is renewed day by day' (2 Cor. iv. 16). One day we shall be perfect spirit, and therefore absolutely free from all evil even as Christ is. The presence of the Spirit of Christ in us now is a sure pledge (ἀρραβών) of the divine glory of our future life after death. God Himself thereby guarantees it. We have already entered upon it here and now. The ideal future is already present 'in part,' and carries with it the moral obligation of living up to it. 'If we live in the Spirit, let us walk in the Spirit. Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.'[2]

In fact, in Paul's eyes so completely is the Christian spirit identified with the Spirit of Christ Himself that all distinction between the two frequently vanishes altogether. Over and over again our English translators do not know whether to spell 'spirit' with a small or a capital letter. The two *are* one. 'He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit' (1 Cor. vi. 17).

Not that Paul believes in perfection in this life. Phil. iii. 12-14 vividly places before us his high ideal, his own keen sense that his union with Christ, on this side of the grave, is not complete, but still 'in part,' though it is ever progressive. 'Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I

[1] It has been well said: 'The *non posse non peccare* has ceased, but it is not yet a case of *non posse peccare* but of *posse non peccare*.'

[2] Here we have Paul's complete answer to the charge of Antinomianism. The truly spiritual man is a law unto himself. He needs no external law, not even the Decalogue, to keep him straight. His own law and standard of life are more exacting than any external law ever can be.

follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth to those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.'

He clearly sees the ideal perfection which is his goal, Christ's own likeness (2 Cor. iii. 18; Gal. iv. 19). He knows it will be his one day. He is, however, so far from thinking that he has already reached the perfection for which he is destined by God that he is ever dissatisfied with his present state, 'forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth to those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.'

So conscious is he of his present state falling short of his high ideal, he is so alive to the snares of the flesh, which may still trip him up at an unguarded moment, that he exclaims: 'Let us work out our own salvation with fear and trembling.' 'Let him who thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.' It is even possible for him, after preaching to others, to be a 'castaway.' But it will be entirely his own fault if this happens. Nothing and nobody, except himself, can pluck him out of Christ's hand or rob him of the perfection that is to be his. God Himself guarantees it. The Spirit of Christ indwelling in him is God's own pledge and seal of the Christ-likeness in store for him. He is 'confident of this very thing, that He Who has begun this good work in him will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ' (Phil. i. 6). Christ is in him, he is in

Christ, and Christ is daily being formed in him more and more (*cf.* Gal. iv. 19).

Paul also connects this mystical union with the rite of Baptism (Rom. vi. 3 ; Gal. iii. 27 ; Col. ii. 12 ; 1 Cor. xii. 13). To this rite he attaches a new and deep meaning, and his language at any rate reminds one strongly of the corresponding rites of initiation in connection with the Greek 'mysteries.'[1] Did he regard Baptism in itself as the actual efficient means of our mystical union with Christ? Or did he merely regard Baptism as the perfect symbol of that union—*i.e.* was it to him an acted parable, in which we rehearse our Lord's Death when we sink into the water, His Burial when we are hidden in it a while, and His Resurrection when we emerge from it new and clean? *Quot homines, tot sententiæ.* On the whole, the mystic sacramental efficacy of the rite seems to be Paul's own view. Just as he says that they who eat or drink what is offered to idols have fellowship with devils (1 Cor. x. 20, 21), so he assures us that the unworthy use of the Christian sacraments involves bodily sickness, or even death (1 Cor. xi. 27-30).

(C) *The Holy Spirit.*

S. Paul, it is true, is far more concerned with what the Holy Spirit does in our hearts than with what He is, but here again we must begin with what may seem to many a wearisome inquiry into Paul's views of the personality of the Holy Spirit.

[1] S. Paul was certainly familiar with the *language* of Greek mysteries at least, and his own mystic nature suggests even closer affinity. His terminology—*e.g.* μυστήριον, τέλειος, μυεῖσθαι, σφραγίζεσθαι—is decidedly mystic ; and in 1 Cor. x. 20, 21 he distinctly tells us that they who eat or drink things offered to idols have actual fellowship with devils.

The distinct personality of the Holy Spirit is by no means clearly defined in S. Paul. He fully believed 'in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, Who spake by the Prophets.' But it is more than an open question whether he would use these words in the Trinitarian sense we attach to them.

Sometimes he speaks of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of God the Father, sometimes as Christ's Spirit, sometimes 'The Spirit is Christ.'

In Rom. viii. 9 the Holy Spirit is at one and the same time the Spirit of God and also of Christ. 'Ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the *Spirit of God* is in you. Now if any man have not the *Spirit of Christ*, he is none of His.'

This passage proves, as clearly as Phil. ii. 6, the identity of God and His Christ, but it is very vague on the personality of the Holy Spirit. It assures us that Paul did not look upon the nature and essence of Christ as being of another and lower order than that of God. They are one and the same in their nature. But it almost looks as if Paul viewed the Spirit as standing to God and Christ very much in the same relation as our spirit does to us. 1 Cor. ii. 11 strongly supports this view: 'What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.' The very structure of the verse compels us to understand 'which is in Him.' Q. E. D.

On the other hand 2 Cor. xiii. 14, 'The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the

fellowship of the Holy Ghost,' *seems* to place the distinct personality of the Holy Ghost on a par with that of the Father and the Son. But does it really do so? We shall come back to this point presently. Let us first collate the passages bearing on the identity of the Spirit with the Father and the Son, or both, or one only.

(a) *The Spirit identified with God's Spirit.*

1 Cor. iii. 16; *cf.* vi. 19: 'Ye are the temple of God and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you.' Rom. viii. 11: 'If the Spirit of Him (*i.e.* the Father) that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you.' Gal. iv. 6: It is God Who sends forth the Spirit into men's hearts. Gal. iii. 5: God 'ministereth to you the Spirit.' 1 Cor. ii. 12: 'Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit Which is of God.'

Thus it is by the Spirit that God is immanent in man. The Spirit is God Himself working and indwelling in us. Wherever the Spirit dwells and works, there God dwells and works. It is in this way that 'In God we live and move and have our being.'

(b) *The Spirit identified with Christ's Spirit.*

e.g. Gal. iv. 6: 'God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father.' Rom. viii. 9: 'If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.'

(c) *The Spirit identified with Christ.*

2 Cor. iii. 17: 'Now the Lord is that Spirit.'

Even 2 Cor. xiii. 14, the *locus classicus* which is always quoted as conclusive proof of the distinct personality of the Holy Spirit, is not by any means con-

vincing. 'The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.' It only corroborates what Paul tells us all along—viz. through Christ we have fellowship with God in His Spirit.

The Love of God is the source of our spiritual life. It is thanks to the gracious self-sacrifice of Christ that we are at one with God, that our life is now linked with that of God. The result of the Love of God and the grace of Christ is the fellowship of the Spirit—*i.e.* our mystical union with God and His Christ. The Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ (Rom. viii. 9) is in us now.[1]

In 1 Cor. xii. 11, 'All these worketh the *one and self-same Spirit*, dividing to every man severally as He will,' the Spirit also seems to be a distinct Person. But if we look at the parallel passage, only five verses back (1 Cor. xii. 6), we read: 'There are diversities of operations, but it is the *same God* which worketh all in all.' So here again the Spirit is the Spirit of God.

It therefore looks as if in Paul the Trinity of the Three Persons is not yet fully developed, though it undoubtedly is 'in the making.' Paul's disciple, 'S. John,' carries it a short step farther, and clearly enunciates it.

In a previous section (B) we have spoken at some length of the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts.

[1] Findlay well expresses this idea: 'While the Son is the root and ground of human relations to God, the Spirit is the living energy forming and sustaining those relations, the moral dynamic (ἐξ ὕψους δύναμις, Luke xxiv. 49; *cf.* 1 Thess. i. 5; 1 Cor. ii. 4; Eph. iii. 16).'

He it is who makes us holy. He is the Life-Giver quickening us into moral and spiritual life. He deals death to sin and the flesh. He hallows the human body and makes it the 'member of Christ' and 'the temple of God.' He will hereafter raise it up in the likeness of Christ's resurrection-body and make it a spirit-body (Rom. viii. 11).[1] The Holy Spirit is also the efficient cause of our oneness with Christ, as well as the witness of our divine sonship, and the 'earnest' or pledge of our Christ-likeness hereafter. All the gifts graces and experiences of our Christian life are His fruit. He not only makes us one with Christ, but one with our brethren (Eph. iv.). Thus is established on earth God's Kingdom of Love, the Church, the Body of which Christ is the Head, and in which He finds His self-expression, His 'fulness.'

In one point, more especially, does Paul's conception of the work of the Holy Spirit in men's hearts mark a great advance on the general Christian view current in his day.

The Apostolic Church shared the traditional view of the Spirit which had sprung from the accepted theory of Inspiration. It was commonly believed the Spirit only made its presence felt on rare occasions either in prophets or in 'holy men of God' generally. Therefore, although early Christians had a vivid sense of the presence of the Holy Spirit in their midst, they only recognised this presence where there was some striking

[1] *i.e.*, as 2 Cor. v. tells us, not merely the present fleshly body purified, but a body of an entirely different nature, where spirit will be all in all and the flesh gone. Then and not till then will our salvation be complete and evil non-existent in us.

manifestation of the Spirit's outpouring—*e.g.* in the gifts of tongues, healing, prophecy, miracles and so forth.

A few pre-eminently gifted Christians—*e.g.* Stephen, Barnabas—noted for their exceptional faith, zeal or power are spoken of in the Acts, it is true, as habitually 'filled with the Holy Ghost.' Their faith and spiritual power were so extraordinary that nothing short of the permanent indwelling of the Spirit could account for their great gifts. Not so with the rank and file of Christians. The Hand of the Lord was upon them only now and then. It would have been considered almost derogatory to the majesty of the Holy Spirit to look for manifestations of His Presence in the ordinary experience of everyday life.

Paul, with his conviction of our intimate union with the Spirit of Christ, could not possibly entertain such an idea of a single moment in our Christian life uninfluenced by the Spirit. The Spirit of Christ has taken possession of the whole man, and influences his every thought, word and deed. He leavens his whole character. As the guiding principle of the man's whole life, the Spirit is never dormant, or reserved only for big occasions. He is seen at work in the trivial round, the common task just as much as in the working of miracles. Paul realises His Presence in the gifts of tongues and in prophecy, but above all in the brotherly love which 'suffereth long and is kind,' which comforts the sad, helps the weak, raises the fallen, is ready to do a good turn to a neighbour whenever the golden opportunity comes its way, and 'thinketh no evil' (*cf.* Gal. v. 12).[1]

* * * *

[1] The traditional creed of the first church was that in Baptism God 'poured out of His Spirit upon men,' producing miraculous gifts and

We can see for ourselves that Paul's views of 'sin,' 'flesh' and 'spirit' are based on a psychology and a whole world of ideas which belong to an age long past.

Would any man nowadays think of saying to himself that when Adam sinned all mankind sinned in and with him there and then? Does not Paul's picture of sin, as a demon-power 'possessing' our flesh, strike us as quaint, not to put it more strongly? Does he not take too morbid a view of the flesh? Can we fully grasp his mystical union with Christ, and, like him, really believe that Christ and the Christian are one, not as a figure of speech, but in actual fact?

In Paul's system, again, we see the whole of existence divided between two hostile camps, the powers of light and darkness, which forcibly remind us of the Persian rival gods Ahriman and Ormuzd.

The earthly world is the kingdom of Satan and his hierarchy of angels, 'the rulers of this world,' 'the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience' (*i.e.* mankind at large).

Over against this bad earthly world of flesh, under its evil king, stands the spirit-world of heaven, under God as its King. God, in the Person of His Son, takes up the struggle with Satan on man's behalf. Christ, the Second Adam, God's Son, the Man from heaven, champions the cause of the human race as its true

results (Joel ii. 28-32). Paul started with this idea, but advances far beyond it. His revelation of the constant immanence of the Spirit is an epoch-making moment in Christianity. Paul's 'In Him we live and move and have our being' proves that he did not confine the Spirit's presence to Christians. He believed He was in all men and everywhere in the Universe. The only reason why Christians manifest Him more than others is because of their more complete self-surrender to His influence.

Head. He does battle with sin, Satan and death, triumphs over them all, transfigures men into His own likeness, and thus turns Satan's erewhile kingdom into the Kingdom of God.

All these old-world ideas, mainly borrowed from Jewish Apocalypses, sound strange in modern ears. We are out of touch with them. Yet is it not merely the terminology that jars on us, while the same root-facts and problems are still with us to-day? For instance, is it not true that the whole world is divided between two hostile camps, the powers of light and darkness?

Explain it as we may, in the world in which we live we are conscious of a vast amount of evil. The old idea of a solidarity of sin in Adam is a dead issue for us now, but we are confronted to-day by a new solidarity of sin. There is undoubtedly a vast mass of disease, wrong and suffering with us now, due to man's selfishness, violence and thoughtlessness. We used to cast the responsibility for it on the devil's shoulders, now we know that mankind jointly is responsible for these avoidable evils. The individual alone did not produce them, neither can he remove them. We are all jointly responsible both for the burden and its removal.

We are also conscious that ever since Christ came into the world a decided change for the better has set in. His revelation of God as our loving Father and of the Brotherhood of man, and above all His own perfect example of self-sacrificing love for others, have set up a social force more than able to cope with the world's evils. Christ gave Himself body, mind, soul

and heart to the work, and has called others, His disciples, ever since to do the same. In His Name the spiritual forces of the modern world are marshalled against the powers of evil and prevailing over them more and more.

Each man, whether he wills it or not, has to be on the one side or the other. Each one of us must add to the world's evil or help to stem it, fight with Christ or against Him. Stand neutral we cannot. If this is so, is Paul's picture true or false?

Once more, take Paul's views of the 'flesh' and the 'spirit.' No doubt he does take a rather morbid view of the weakness of human nature. This, however, we may say by the way. Paul was a full-blooded Jew, and Jews are full of the fire of passion in more senses than one. Also, we have only to read his picture of mankind in Rom. i. to realise what we know but too well from other sources, that sins of the flesh were rampant in his day. Human nature is still sufficiently frail for some of the world's noblest men to echo Paul's views of the flesh to-day.

But this is not our point here. Paul's theology tells us that man starts with a nature little higher than animal and, by God's grace, ends by being transformed into the likeness of Christ. Need even the man of science quarrel with Paul here? In 1 Cor. xv. 46 we have a very suggestive passage which strikes a very modern keynote. 'Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual.'

What does he tell us here? This, in so many words. Man is in a state of development. He is not

yet evolved to the pitch of perfection God means him to reach. The animal in us must first work itself out before our higher spiritual evolution can set in.

Paul may phrase it quaintly, but he here anticipates our modern standpoint, even as we saw that he practically said 1900 years ago what we are only realising to-day: 'The world is one whole, and God is the meaning of it.'

Both in his reading of the history of the individual and of the race in Rom. v. and vii. we have seen that he makes man pass through three stages: (1) a stage of unconscious sin; (2) the dawn of conscience; (3) the conscious struggle of man's self-development.

Look at the Adam he sets before us. He is merely a 'living soul' (*i.e.* only a living being), of the earth earthy, with little or no spirituality, as easy a prey to temptation as a child. At any rate, the human race from Adam to Moses he calls 'sinners,' but he does not hold them in any way responsible for their actions, for they know no better. They are living, as we should call it, in a state of nature. 'First that which is natural.' This is man's starting-point, and what is his goal, according to Paul? The ideal he sets before us is so high that it is a task without end to attain it. Nothing will satisfy him but that man should evolve from a low sensual nature, almost unredeemed by any virtue, right up to a supremely perfect condition. Cost what it may—and Paul knows it will cost much, 'work out your own salvation with fear and trembling' —he must ever struggle upwards. In spite of his animal nature, in spite of imperfections and pitfalls within and without, he must master himself and his

environment, and never rest till he achieves the perfect manhood God destined for him before the foundation of the world. That is to say, Paul makes man start just a little higher than the brutes, and will not let him stop till he has grown into the likeness of God.

Is Paul here again right or wrong? Was there a stage in man's evolution when he was all but on a level with the brutes? Was there a moment when conscience dawned and he became aware of a law of God and a sense of moral obligation? Did he still continue to feel the pull of the animal lusts in the flesh? Groping after better things in the light of conscience, did he experience a struggle, as of a dual personality within himself, and oft do the evil he would not and fail to do the good he would? Has there been a progressive evolution of man's moral sense and, therefore, of his ideals? In our better moments are we ever satisfied with ourselves as we are, and what is the limit we set to the further growth to which we look forward? Does Paul's ideal of the Christ-likeness appeal to us, or is it pitched too high? Are we conscious of an influencing, guiding, sustaining power for good—or the reverse—from some source which is not ourselves, in our upward struggle? What is this influencing power?

In other words, is man's natural, moral and spiritual evolution a myth or a fact? Is it mechanical, is it the work of chance, or is it intelligently guided? Is there a First Cause and also 'one far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves'?

As each man answers these questions for himself so will he agree or disagree with Paul's views: 'First

that which is natural, afterward that which is spiritual . . . and as we have borne the image of the earthy, so shall we also bear the image of the heavenly' . . . 'thanks be to God which giveth us the victory' . . . 'for it is God who enableth us both to will and to do.'

Love Divine, says Paul, is behind man's evolution as its driving power and its key. 'In Him we live and move and have our being.' He is our source, our life and our goal.

CHAPTER XVI

THE LOVE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

'THERE is none other God but one' (1 Cor. viii. 4). This was as truly the creed of Paul the Christian as of Paul the Pharisee. He could still repeat the First Commandment, 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord,' with all the monotheistic force and fervour of the days when he worshipped as a Pharisee in the synagogue. In this respect there had been no breach in his career.

True, but what a new light his vision of Christ had now poured upon that First Commandment! How much fuller and richer was now his idea of God! 'God Himself, Who caused the light to shine out of darkness, had shone in Paul's heart, to give the light of the knowledge of His own Glory in the face of Jesus Christ' (2 Cor. iv. 4-6). Christ and God are one!

Paul now reads his Old Testament with new eyes, and sees plainly what was there all along and he knew it not. How blind he had been! How could he have read his Bible all those years and not noticed that all through the Law and the Prophets there are clear tokens of distinct Persons in one Godhead!

To quote only one passage, a verse of one of his favourite Psalms[1] (cx.), how could he so often have

[1] See references to it in Rom. viii. 34; Col. iii. 1; Eph. i. 20; 1 Cor. xv. 23.

read: 'The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool,' and failed to grasp that it refers to two Persons!

From the day of his conversion, when 'God revealed *His Son* in Paul,' His Son Who is 'the image of God' (2 Cor. iv. 4), he realised that, now as ever, 'there is none other God but one.' True, but he now sees that this Oneness is not that dry, bare, abstract, inadequate Oneness he imagined in his Pharisee days. The God of Scripture is not a self-absorbed, self-centred Being. He is not so rapt in His own perfection that there is no scope for the exercise of love and the highest feelings till He has created man and His Universe and called them 'very good.'

'The Lord said unto my Lord'—there is a distinction of Persons in the one Godhead. The Christian idea of the Godhead is the true one. It alone admits of the perfect interchange and reciprocity of the highest affections which even God cannot do without, and this can only exist between persons.

Why is it, then, that the Jews, who know and love their Old Testament so well, have never seen this? Why have not such suggestive passages as 'The Lord said unto my Lord,' or 'Let us make man in our image,' and scores of others, opened their eyes to the truth so patent to Christians? Paul replies: 'Their minds were blinded, for until this day remaineth the same vail (*i.e.* which Moses put over his face) untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament, which vail is now done away with in Christ' (2 Cor. iii. 13-14). In the very next chapter he tells us that he himself was in exactly the same plight till God shone in his heart

and revealed His Godhead in the face of His Son Jesus Christ.

He now knows as a fact that the 'Jesus of Nazareth' Who met him on the road to Damascus is none other than the *God of Israel*, the God of his fathers, in Whom he believed all along. He was not all in the dark in his old Pharisaic days, but he only saw half the truth. Now he sees it all. The Father and the Son are one. Christ is God, God is Christ. 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.'

Paul may henceforth distinguish their spheres of work, but God's work is Christ's work, Christ's work is God's. They are even as the rays of light and heat in the same sunbeam.

For instance, Paul constantly gives them different titles. The Father is God (*θεός*), while the Son is Lord (*κύριος*). But it is only in relation to man and the Universe that Christ is Lord. The phrase always points to usward—*e.g.* '*we* are the Lord's,' '*our* Lord Jesus Christ.' It has special reference to the Kingdom of God Christ has come to establish. God is also Lord of this Kingdom. He has only committed the care of it to the Son till all its enemies are subdued and all believers gathered into it. As soon as this is done, Christ's sole Lordship ceases. His Lordship in nowise precludes His Godhead, for He is God eternally. Paul never can think of the Son except, as in Rom. ix. 5, with the clear understanding that 'Christ, Who is over all, (is) God blessed for ever. Amen.'[1]

[1] *i.e.* if, as is usually read, we place a comma after *σάρκα*. If we put a full stop, and this is of course admissible, then it is an ascription of praise to God the Father: 'May God, Who is over all, be blessed for

Christ and God, throughout Paul's Epistles, are so completely one that, in every act done by Christ, Paul sees an act of God the Father.

This long preamble is necessary, because it makes it so much more easy for us to arrive at a true conception of Paul's idea of God's Love and righteousness. His Epistles undoubtedly lay him open at times to misconception, for his picture of God and His Christ are apt to suggest a wrong impression, and for this reason.

The Death of Christ 'on our behalf' is Paul's dominating thought from his earliest letter (1 Thess.) right up to the last. 'Christ and Him crucified' is the alpha and omega of his gospel. He knows no other.

More than this, especially in his earlier letters, there is a picture—a survival of Paul's old Pharisaic legalism—which represents God as the Righteous Judge Whose justice is not, and cannot be, satisfied till He has exacted from His own innocent Son the full penalty for man's sin.

Is it any wonder that many people, misreading Paul, look up to God the Father with fear and awe, while they have none but love for God the Son, Who so loved man that He gladly sacrificed His own life as our scapegoat? In their eyes God the Father is a righteous Judge, but Christ is essentially man's Saviour and Friend.

A superficial reading of Paul's Epistles may, and does, convey this false impression, but nothing can

ever.' But in that case εὐλογητός should precede θεός and ὤν is superfluous.

possibly be farther from Paul's mind. His gospel is shot through and through with one golden thread connecting it all and giving it its true significance: 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them' (2 Cor. v. 19). That is to say, *The Death of Christ is the supreme manifestation of the Love of God.* This one keynote is constantly struck by Paul: 'God commendeth His own love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.'

God's Love for us in the death of another, even if that other be His own Son, is robbed of half its meaning till we realise how truly one to Paul are God and His Son; *then* we shall see God's Love in Christ's Death as Paul saw it. 'There is none other God but one' (1 Cor. viii. 4); 'Christ, Who is the image of God' (2 Cor. iv. 4); 'Christ, Who is over all, (is) God blessed for ever. Amen.' (Rom. ix. 5).

The picture Paul draws for us of the Father is Christ's own beautiful picture of a Loving Father, Who is not stern and exacting before He can forgive, but infinitely kind, tender and compassionate, and is Himself in Christ running to welcome and embrace us, His prodigal sons.

The righteousness of God.

We shall see later on that the Pauline phrase, 'the righteousness of God,' is extremely hard to define. It is one of the hard problems of Pauline theology. Does it mean (*a*) God's own personal righteousness, or (*b*) the righteousness which is ours but comes to us from God? Indeed, is there not a third alternative?

Why need we tie down the phrase at all to one meaning in such a way as to compel us to choose one of the two, but not both? From his elastic use of the word 'spirit,' which he employs in three different senses, we have already seen that Paul was not a slave to logically exact terminology. 'Christ's Spirit' can mean to Paul either (*a*) the Spirit which is in Christ Himself, or (*b*) the Spirit of Christ which is in us. Why should not 'the righteousness of God' admit of the same twofold meaning? Why should it not express in the first instance (*a*) the righteousness which is in God, and, as a corollary (*b*) God's righteousness which is in us, of which God is the author and source?

For our immediate purpose, however, this difficult question does not concern us. We have already spoken of God's Love. What we now want to know is: What is Paul's conception of God's own personal righteousness, as one of His attributes? What does he mean when he speaks of God as a 'righteous God'?

Nowhere does Paul give us a formal definition of 'the righteousness of God.' We can only ascertain its Pauline meaning by (*a*) reference to the context, or (*b*) the light of its use in the Old Testament, and also in the New Testament outside Paul's own writings.

Dr. Sanday truly says: 'A phrase so familiar as "the righteousness of God," and so deeply rooted in the common language of men, could not be violently wrenched from its usual associations and transferred to others without more explicit warning than any that is given in Paul's Epistles.' We must also bear in mind that the whole world of thought in which Paul the Pharisee had lived, in which he had taken root with all

the fibres of his soul, was bound up in the Old Testament. True, Paul's whole theology is based first and foremost on his own living experience. But we cannot fail to see throughout his system of theology unmistakable traces that his views are the outcome of profound reflection on the Old Testament. He seems to live in it, to steep his very soul in its spirit. Its words are on his lips at every turn, and it is his final court of appeal.

In the earliest books of the Bible righteousness has little or nothing of the high moral meaning we now attach to it. It has to do with a man's legal *rights*. It forbids a man to tamper with what belongs to God or man as his by right of property. For instance, a man is righteous who refrains from adultery, not on the score of morality, but because adultery is interference with the chattel of his neighbour.

At this period, *re* (we use the *legal* word deliberately) two parties in a suit, the one is righteous, the other is not. It is purely a question for the judge to decide, on the merits of the case, whether the plaintiff or defendant is *legally* in the right or wrong. Moral considerations do not enter into the question at all. If the judge gives a verdict in the man's favour, he is righteous, let his personal character be what it may. Established law and custom is the only standard of right or wrong.

In this early stage of the Old Testament the Judge, be he God or man, is righteous who holds the scales of justice perfectly evenly between the two parties without any personal bias of any kind. [Strange to say, we shall see that the Rabbinic idea of righteousness in Paul's day was closely akin to this.

By the time we reach the age of the Prophets (canonical) the whole idea of righteousness has risen to a far higher plane. It acquires a meaning at once more moral and spiritual.

With the rapid growth of trade and towns, wealth and luxury had vastly increased. In the train of prosperity followed its usual evils: large estates (Isa. v. 8); oppression (Amos ii. 6); a lax life (Amos vi.; Hosea iv., v.); and a falling off in piety. Kings, priests and rich alike oppressed the weak and poor. Justice was bought and sold. Widows and orphans were defrauded.

In the face of all these evil practices the prophets come forward as the accredited mouthpieces of God, and in His Name denounce God's judgment on all injustice and oppression. They proclaim a new righteousness resting on deeper foundations than mere legal rights. It is founded on the moral character of God Himself. He is a terrible avenger, it is true, of man's backslidings, but above all longsuffering and of great kindness, full of love and tender mercy. He is a righteous God, but His righteousness now means avenging injustice and oppression, everywhere redressing the wrongs of the poor and defenceless. It is a righteousness which insists on rightness of character and a recognition in all men of what is due to others.

Naturally, at this stage the righteousness of the Judge, be he God or man, enters on a new phase. He is no longer a righteous judge merely because he holds the scales of justice impartially between the two parties in the suit without personal bias or any ulterior considerations. His court of justice is a court of

equity. Moral considerations now come in. He tempers justice with mercy. He is the champion of the weak against the oppression of the strong, the deliverer and saviour of the poor and the friendless. He does not always exact the full penalties as he is entitled to do by strict law. He leans to that mercy and equity which is the truest and highest justice. In his court Shylock and Antonio fare as they should.

This is the high-water mark of Old Testament religion in its conception of the 'righteousness of God.' It appeals to all that is noblest in man. It is this prophetic teaching which Christ so constantly takes up and reaffirms, setting His own seal to it.

So it is with Paul. In his theology God's righteousness is abundantly tempered with mercy. It has a large element of love in it, because Paul's God is what He is, a God of 'grace,' our loving Father.

But Paul is entirely free from that misconception of God's mercy which is the peculiar danger of our own day. In our healthy reaction from the stern Calvinistic picture of God as a wrathful exacting Judge we have gone to the opposite extreme. We have watered down the righteousness of God till it is little better than the mildness of a weak, if good-natured, Judge Who lightly acquits the guilty and winks at their sin as if He were more or less indifferent to it.

The merciful righteousness of Paul's God is not of this kind. God would not be God if He could regard sin thus lightly. He would not be true to His own character. Nay, He would not even come up to our ideal of man at his best. Our own conscience tells us that it is a grievous wrong to God, to society, even

to the man himself, to forgive the guilty on too easy terms.

If God is a God of Love, He is also essentially holy and just. To speak of a holy God Who can wink at sin, or of a just God Who can look upon the guilty as innocent, is a contradiction in terms.

Men sometimes speak of sin as if it were a sort of breach of etiquette, instead of a setting at naught of the eternal laws of God, which are as essential to our well-being as the air we breathe. They use language of sin as if God, like some good-natured prince, ought to overlook slips which can not really affect or harm Him, but only thwart His personal wishes.

Canon Liddon once said: 'Sin not only contradicts God's nature, it is in conflict with His very existence and ours. *Sin, if it could be indefinitely exaggerated, would destroy God Himself.*'

It is only when we have a clear vision of God's holiness, when we see that sin is thus wholly antagonistic to Him, fatal to the well-being of His Universe and likely to destroy it, that we understand the utter necessity He is under of crushing it with no light hand. God's justice is only the reverse side of His goodness, and if God could indulge sinners He would not be God. Precisely because God's Love is eternally pure and holy, therefore it is a consuming fire to all sin. God loves the sinner, because he is His child, but He hates his sin. Only God and our mothers know what this means.

It is just here that Paul's gospel comes in. Even in his Pharisaic days righteousness had always been his one aim, the chief end and good of man. He had sought it then in vain, now he has found it in Christ,

and calls it 'the righteousness of God.' Once he had thought it could only be obtained by good works of his own. Now he *knows* it is the pure gift of God. No wonder he so constantly ascribes it to the 'grace' of God—*i.e.* the Love that loves men in spite of their sins and contrary to all their deserts.

But is not this asking God to do the very thing we said a moment ago He could not do and yet be God? How can God acquit a sinner, and let him leave His court of justice without a stain on his character, when all the while both God and the man himself know that he is a guilty sinner? We can understand the righteousness which punishes, but can a righteous God Who declares the sinner righteous make such a declaration and yet speak the truth?

Yes, answers Paul; God's righteousness is in no way compromised. Man *has* paid the full penalty for his sin. He has paid it in the Person of Christ, the Head of the whole human race, the Man from heaven, the full and more than adequate representative of, and substitute for, all mankind. In paying man's debt in full by His own Death on the Cross, Christ has both vindicated and satisfied God's righteousness, His stern and awful denunciation of sin. If, says Paul, you would take the full measure of sin's awfulness in God's eyes, stand by that Cross and there note how He 'is made sin for us, Who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.' Remember, too, that God and His Christ are one. 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Him.' Then you will understand how, even on that Cross, the righteousness and the Love of God went hand in hand.

But, naturally exclaims the modern man, this is an artificial kind of righteousness. If I am guilty of murder or it matters not what, and another man stands at the bar of justice in my stead and pays the penalty I ought to bear, I may escape scot-free, but this does not in any way cancel my guilt or alter my character either in God's eyes, or man's, or my own. This is not enough. What I need is not to be declared righteous, it is rather to be made righteous in myself.

This is a perfectly fair and just criticism. There is no doubt that Paul lays himself open to it. He cannot entirely rid himself of his old Rabbinic training and legal cast of mind. He does say that God, by virtue of the expiatory death of Christ, imputes to guilty man the righteousness which is altogether Christ's and not man's own at all. On the strength of Christ's vicarious suffering God pronounces a verdict of full acquittal on the sinner, declares him absolutely innocent, or as Paul puts it, 'justifieth the ungodly.' Paul's justification undoubtedly does mean this.

But it would be a very grave mistake to say that this is Paul's whole meaning. Paul is giving us in his theology his own personal experience of what Christ has done for him. He, above all others, understood the meaning of the bondage of sin. It was not from sin's penalty that he craved for deliverance, but from sin itself. Such a crude doctrine of Redemption as that just outlined never could have satisfied him, and his Epistles clearly prove that he meant a great deal more than this.

We can readily understand why he so strongly insists on the fact that the righteousness of man comes

entirely from God, is His pure gift of grace, is grounded absolutely on God's good will and loving-kindness, not on any work in man. In a way, this paradoxical statement was forced upon him by the false views of righteousness current in his day. The Pharisaic idea of it was that the relationship between God and man was based on a kind of legal contract: so much work and so much pay. Every act of obedience to the Law was entered by God in His heavenly books to man's credit side, while every transgression of the Law was debited against him. If the good preponderated over the bad, and the balance dipped on the right side, the Divine verdict of justification followed as a matter of course, and the man was declared righteous by God.

Naturally, Paul waged uncompromising war with such an arithmetical and self-complacent idea of righteousness. He went to the opposite pole. He emphatically declares that our righteousness is a pure gift of God. Our sins are wiped out, we leave God's court of justice 'not guilty' and without a stain on our character, not through any virtue of our own—we have none and we plead none—but as a pure act of goodness on God's part. In the Person of His Son, He takes our sin and gives us His righteousness in exchange.

This is good and wholesome teaching, but Paul takes care not to stop there. We have not the faintest conception of what Paul means by 'grace' and 'faith' if we believe that Paul ignores the moral side even of justification. True, Paul never says that faith in itself saves us. This would be to turn faith into a new kind of meritorious action, and Paul will not allow that. None

the less, Paul makes faith a condition of forgiveness. We cannot be justified without it. But faith has a decided moral value of its own. It is an act of the deepest moral and spiritual meaning, nothing less than a complete self-surrender of the whole heart to God in a spirit of humility, love and absolute trustfulness in God's goodness. It is the complete renunciation of self in every shape and form, and a devoted, confident dependence upon the love and power of God.

Then, and only then, when we unreservedly open our hearts to God, and only in so far as our hearts are thus receptive, can we make our own the redemption Christ has bought for us on the Cross. Then, and only then, does God offer us as His free gift our full acquittal, His own righteousness, and our adoption as His sons.

Faith thus becomes the hand humbly, reverently, lovingly, confidently reached out to receive this free gift of God. As already hinted, Paul sees no notion of merit in faith. He does not, like the Jews of his day, say that it *makes us worthy* of God's gift. Just the reverse; he insists that even faith comes from God. But faith undoubtedly *is* of great worth in God's eyes. It *has* a moral value. This absolute self-surrender to God and implicit trust in His goodness does justice to God's character, and is the only thing the sinner has to offer to God. It has been finely called 'the righteousness of the unrighteous,' because it is the disclaimer of all virtue, and this is the queen of all virtues. Faith thus does honour to God, and a man who has faith already has in his heart the good soil which will produce a rich harvest as soon as God's seed is planted in it.

For justification is not God's whole work of grace, only its first moment. It is the act by which man is *admitted* to grace, placed in a new and right relation to God. Man's sin had created a gulf between God and himself, and God has bridged it, so that man and He may again be 'at one' and He may help man to become like Himself, his Father. The two things, justification and sanctification, are clearly distinguished by S. Paul, but, of course, in practice they cannot be thus divorced (Rom. vii., viii.). If 'righteousness' is a gift, it is also a character. As soon as we are justified we are sons of God, and our mystical union with Christ has begun, and with it the whole transformation of our life and character. It involves, nay, it guarantees, our developing daily more and more into the Christ-likeness, and we dare not stop till the Christ-likeness is formed in us (Gal. iv. 19).

Now, surely, we see what Paul means. The 'righteousness of God' which is ours by virtue of the expiatory Death of Christ on our behalf is not a merely artificial righteousness. S. Paul may have clothed his thought in a legal form which suggests this impression, but he well knew that justification and sanctification go hand in hand, both in God's eyes and in our own actual experience. They are really one, though from a human point of view we distinguish them. In justification we are made one with Christ, brought into vital union with Him, and the *process* of sanctification begins simultaneously with this momentary act. Thus it is true that we start by being *reckoned* righteous, but we are on the highroad to becoming actually righteous in ourselves.

CHAPTER XVII

PAUL'S CONCEPTION OF CHRIST

In Paul's Christology there is a practical and a speculative side. This is the case with all New Testament writers.

In the first instance, all that the New Testament tells us about Christ is the outcome, the spontaneous expression, of the personal faith and experience of these early Christians. They want to tell us what Jesus is to them, what He has done for them, how and why He has transfigured their whole character so that they now feel as if they had passed from death unto life.

The Jesus Whom they know is no longer merely the Jesus Who walked this earth and went in and out amongst them doing good. He is now first and foremost their personal Saviour and Lord. With Peter, they are sure and certain that He is none other than the Christ, the Son of God, the Lord from heaven. This is why Sin has not been able to ensnare Him, nor Death to hold Him in the grave. In the light of His Resurrection they now see, on that Calvary Cross, God dying to save them from their sins. The Jesus Who rose on Easter Day has gone up into heaven, and is even now sitting at the right hand of God. But He is with them still, even more than before. Of this they

have a clear proof in His Holy Spirit,[1] so evidently present and active in their midst. One day He will come again in Glory, and that soon, to inaugurate the Kingdom of God.

These were truths of which the First Church had not a shadow of a doubt. These New Testament writers seek to give expression to their convictions, each in his own way. In the Titles assigned to Christ, the relationship to God attributed to Him, the life-giving power ascribed to His Spirit, each writer from his own standpoint gives us the total impression which Christ's Personality has made upon him. Yet their Portraits all agree. Each gives us the portrait of One Who is at once the rebuke and inspiration of every age, a moral Ideal which realises once and for all the highest aspirations of mankind, so that there is no higher goodness than that which we see in Him. It is a picture of such inexpressible moral beauty that even critics of the most advanced anti-supernaturalist school can only evade calling Him God by attributing to the Man Jesus qualities so sublime as really to embrace all that we understand by God. To imagine that a set of ordinary men, such as we know these New Testament writers to be, could ever have invented such a Portrait is to believe in a miracle as great as the Incarnation itself.

If New Testament Christology, generally, is the outcome of personal living experience, most especially is this true in Paul's case. With the exception of 'S. John'

[1] The outpouring of the Spirit in the days of the Messianic Kingdom had long been foretold by the prophets—*e.g.* Jer. xxxi. 31 *sqq.*; Ezek. xxxvi. 26 *sqq.*; Joel ii. 28. Hence in Acts, Peter is made to appeal to Joel to prove that the Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit shows the Messiahship of Christ.

and Hebrews—two Pauline books—there is a strong family likeness in the other New Testament writings. Paul's theology is all his own, because he has gone through a Christian experience which is all his own. He, too, has seen the Christ and come under His influence. He, too, is conscious of having passed from death unto life under the control of Christ's life-giving Spirit. He also wants to tell us what Christ is to him, what He has done for him. As we read Paul's Epistles we feel what a hold Paul had on Christ and Christ on Paul. Harnack truly says: 'The Pauline theology, this theology of a converted Pharisee, is the strongest proof of the self-complete and universal power of the influence of the Person of Jesus.'

All Paul's utterances about Christ's Person and work are quite spontaneous and come straight from his heart. They are the ripe fruit of living experience, not of mere speculative thought or second-hand information. It is this that stamps the Christianity of Paul as his own. From what we know of Paul we can see it could not be otherwise. Not only was his Christian experience in a class by itself, but his depth and originality of temperament made him stamp his own signature on everything with which he had anything to do.

Let us very briefly glance back at the history of the man. Up to the age of thirty he was an out-and-out Pharisee to whom Jesus was anathema. Suddenly, in a moment of time, the crisis of his life comes upon him. He sees the risen Jesus, and henceforth for him Jesus is the Lord.

Whether as a Christian or a Pharisee, whatever he did, he did it with all his might; whatever he believed,

he believed with all his heart. Fearlessly honest and sincere, impatient of half-truths, it would have been a sacrilege in his eyes to darken and degrade the soul by accepting on bare authority borrowed opinions which his experience and reason could not endorse and convert into convictions. A man of this intense temperament could never rest till he had worked out and thought out the articles of his creed to their utmost limits.

For example, one day as a Pharisee he made a great discovery. Judaism told him, 'Keep the Law,' *do* good works, this is God's one way to righteousness. He read the Tenth Commandment, and for the first time it dawned upon him that to covet (*i.e.* not an action, but a mere feeling or state of heart) is in itself sin (Rom. vii. 7). *To do*, then, was not enough. *To be* was the one thing that mattered. This discovery was for Paul the beginning of the end. From that day, though he did not realise it at the time, Paul's Judaism was doomed.

No wonder that, immediately after his conversion, a man of this strong, independent character does not go, as would any one but Paul, straight to the Apostles or other competent guides for instruction. He proceeds at once to Arabia, there to think out his whole position and recast his creed, alone with his God. Not till three years afterwards does he visit Jerusalem and spend a fortnight with S. Peter. Well may Paul say that the gospel he preaches is not after man, 'neither did I receive it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.'

He does not, of course, ignore the fundamental truths which his fellow-Christians around him, Apostles and others, have already recognised. Before his conversion

his persecuting zeal had made him familiar with the main tenets of Christians. Moreover, his claims for the originality and independence of his gospel do not for one moment mean that he deliberately refused to receive any information or help from believers in Christ during his early Christian days.

This is not the freedom and originality he claims for his gospel. All that he implies is that, from the outset, he is confident he has had a spiritual knowledge of Christ better than any knowledge of 'Christ after the flesh' such as the Apostles or other eye-witnesses could impart to him. It was not Jesus, a Man of flesh and blood, that appeared to him in his vision, but Christ the glorified, a spiritual Being. It was by the light of Christ in the Spirit, and not Christ after the flesh, that he resolved henceforth to guide his own life and that of others. He well knew how this spiritual Christ had transfigured his whole life, made a 'new creature' of him; he also very soon discovered by his own experience as an evangelist that the same knowledge of a spiritual Christ changed the lives of others in precisely the same way. Therefore he made this his one gospel and would have no other.

But Paul's Christ is not a different Christ from that of the Twelve. He avowedly endorses their teaching. 'I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again according to the Scriptures. . . . *Therefore whether it is I or they, so we preach* and so ye believed.'

None the less, Paul repeats the Gospel story in his own way. He brings out of it a significance unsuspected

by others. Many were the sources from which he drew —*e.g.* the Old Testament, Rabbinic theology, Apocalyptic literature, a popular knowledge of Stoic philosophy and Greek mysteries. But his one supreme source lay in a rich personal experience interpreted in the light of the Son of God revealed *in* him. Paulinism is essentially the outcome of the Apostle's attempt to think out for himself the relations of the Lord Jesus Christ to God, man, sin, law, grace, death and life. He is convinced that the Spirit of Christ—and to Paul Christ is a Spirit—is in itself fully adequate to give a coherent and intelligible unity and significance to the existence, history and destiny of a world which would otherwise be without any meaning.

We cannot spare a single New Testament writing, Paul's Epistles least of all,[1] and the one fact which gives Paul's conception of the Person and work of Christ its chief value and charm is that behind every one of his words lies his own heart-experience. It was not to no purpose that Paul had never seen Jesus in the flesh and knew less of His earthly life and Person than the Twelve. He was meant to gain his knowledge of the spiritual Christ through inward struggle and anguish, so that he might in his writings give expression to an experience through which many after him would be called to pass. Had Paul not

[1] We are all apt to envy the first generation of Christians their great privilege of having seen Christ in the flesh. We regard our own position in that respect as a loss and a hindrance. Paul in every page points out to us a better way of facing our situation. It is infinitely better to see Christ with the eye of the soul than with the eye of the body, to have a personal knowledge of the Christ Whom we have not seen than to have companied with Him all the time He was on earth, or to be able to describe with accuracy every detail of His Person and mode of life.

passed from sorrow and struggle to peace and power in Christ, he never would have construed the Person and work of Christ as he has done. We should then have known the real Christ far less fully than we do.

For, strange as it sounds, the character of a great man is known not least through those, his friends, whom he has stamped with his own personality and moulded after his own character. So it is that, if we would understand Christ fully, we must see what He made of men like Paul who unreservedly surrendered themselves to His influence; we must know what they thought of Him. In a Paul, Christ expresses and reveals Himself. Such a man is, as Paul himself tells us, a 'living Epistle of Christ, His own handwriting, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart . . . a living Epistle of Christ, known and read of all men.'

We must, of course, ever recognise the fact that in Paul's picture we have the Personality of Jesus Christ as seen through Paul's eyes. So it is exactly with 'S. John's' gospel. But the best proof that Paul's Portrait of Christ is true in itself lies in the unchallengeable fact that the universal consent of spiritually enlightened men all the world over has endorsed his portraiture of our Lord. If the words of the Westminster Confession are true: 'Our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority of Holy Scripture is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness in our own hearts,' then Paul's testimony to Christ bears God's own stamp and mint-mark.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE PERSON AND WORK OF CHRIST

IN this chapter we shall have to repeat much that has already been said. Paul's system of theology is so compactly knit together as one organic whole that each section is part and parcel of the rest. It is as impossible to treat one portion without broaching others as it was for Shylock to cut his pound of flesh without drawing one drop of blood. Thus the only course open to us is briefly to recapitulate what Paul himself has to tell us respecting the Person and Work of Christ in his own words wherever possible.

We have seen that to Paul, as to the whole early Church, our Lord is not only Jesus, but Christ. In Him God and man meet. How is Paul to express the relationship between Christ and God, Christ and man, in a way that will carry conviction to all hearts? For Paul, Christ is the Messiah, the Man from heaven, the Son of God, God Incarnate. How is he to formulate these truths in words and thoughts which will make others see these truths as he sees them? True, the interest he feels in this speculative side of his theology is quite secondary. It is the hold of Christ on his heart, His wondrous influence on his

moral and spiritual life, that is all in all to Paul.[1] But the conviction that Christ is his Saviour and Lord renders it inevitable that he should state how and why he knows that Christ is none other than the Son of God.

We shall now try to analyse Paul's Christology, his views of the Person and work of Christ, and in the Apostle's own words wherever we can.

Christ's real Humanity.

'When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law' (Gal. iv. 4). 'Jesus Christ our Lord, Which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh' (Rom. i. 3).

Here Paul tells us, as emphatically as language can express it, that Jesus was a man born of an earthly woman[2] like ourselves, a Jew with Hebrew blood in His veins.

It would be unnecessary to lay stress on this patent fact were it not for two passages in Paul's writings. In Rom. viii. 3 we read that God sent His Son *in the likeness* of sinful flesh, while in Phil. ii. 7 we are told that 'Christ, being in the form of God, took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made *in the*

[1] *i.e.* Paul does not put his theology in the place of the religion of Jesus, but only as a hedge round about it to preserve it. He correlates it with the rest of the intellectual stock-in-trade of his generation to show men how essentially reasonable is the Christian Faith.

[2] Paul makes no mention of a Virgin-Birth. Indirectly he denies it by calling Jesus the Son of David according to the flesh, which clearly presupposes that Joseph was his father (*cf.* S. Matt. i. 16). With Paul, as with S. John, the higher nature of Christ did not depend upon a miraculous birth, but was the result of His heavenly pre-existence. *Cf.* 'In the beginning was the Word.'

likeness of men, and was found *in fashion as a man*.' On the strength of these passages some people contend that Christ was not a man exactly like ourselves, but only looked like it. Though He was clothed in flesh, it was not in all respects like ours, for it was not liable to sin at all.

If this were true, then Christ is no longer our perfect Example and Pattern. His earthly Life is emptied of half its virtue for us if He was not liable to temptation even as we are. The battle with sin and the flesh was no real struggle to Him as it is to us. If He was not in the 'sinful flesh,' to start with, even as we are, then the fact that He 'knew no sin' has little or no moral value and does not help us at all. Christ's sinlessness does not prove in the very least that we can follow in His steps and live His sinless life. We start handicapped in a way of which Christ had no experience.

This consideration in itself suggests that the interpretation of the two passages in the way just mentioned must be wrong. But *a priori* arguments of this nature go for little in Pauline theology, for Paul constantly makes use of paradox. We can only seize Paul's true meaning by letting Paul speak for himself, construing his words by the light of parallel passages and following the line of thought which runs through his whole theology as its connecting thread.

On purely literary grounds, the idea that Christ's flesh only looked 'like our sinful flesh' is evidently wrong. It involves a mistranslation, or rather misconception, of the Pauline term for 'likeness' (ὁμοίωμα) It has been clearly shown by a whole array of leading

scholars[1] that, in Paul, 'likeness' means a likeness which amounts to identity, and is practically equivalent to 'sameness.' Both Paul's language and the fundamental axioms of his theology compel us to adopt this as his view: Christ came in the likeness of sinful flesh—*i.e.* His flesh was exactly like ours, with all its tendencies to sin included. He was therefore liable to real temptation even as we are. Unlike us, from the very first Christ triumphed over this tendency to sin, through the Spirit of Holiness that was His even on earth. The tendency to sin was there, but He would not indulge it for one moment. The presence of the Holy Spirit gave the sin-tendency no scope for growth, so it atrophied and died. 'He knew no sin.' Christ's Spirit is now in us, and we can do as He did.

This Jesus, made of a woman, of the seed of David according to the flesh — a flesh exactly like our own —'died and was buried' (1 Cor. xv.), like ourselves.

Divinity of Christ.

'He rose again according to the Scriptures' (1 Cor. xv.) and 'was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of Holiness, by the Resurrection from the dead' (Rom. i. 4).

Here we get a new factor in Christ's Personality, though Paul had presupposed it even in speaking of His humanity. There he told us 'God sent His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, born of a woman, etc.' The words 'sent His Son,' clearly indicate that the Man Jesus was some one Who up to the time of His Birth had not been an earthly man, but pre-existed as the 'Son of God.'

[1] On this passage, see Hilgenfeld, Pfleiderer, Holsten, Overbeck, Hausrath, Lüdemann; *cf.* Baur, Hofmann, Zeller, Wendt, Weiss.

Christ is the Son of God in a unique sense. No man is, or can be, 'God's own Son' as Christ is. He is already 'God's own Son' before God sends Him into the world (Rom. viii. 3). He is the 'image of God,' of one essence and nature with God Himself (Col. i. 15; 2 Cor. iv. 4-6). 'Being in the form of God, He thought it not robbery to be equal with God' (Phil. ii. 6). Yet, all through Paul's theology, there are clear hints of a distinct subordination of the Son of God to God the Father. 'Ye are Christ's; Christ is God's' (1 Cor. iii. 23). 'Christ is the head of every man, and the head of Christ is God' (1 Cor. xi. 3). By God Christ is exalted to be Lord (Phil. ii. 9-11), in God's service He exercises the Lordship, and into God's hands He gives it back at last: 'When all things are subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all' (1 Cor. xv. 28).

Christ's pre-existence is clearly proved by several passages—*e.g.* 'Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that *though He was rich*, yet for your sakes He became poor' (2 Cor. viii. 9). He is distinctly called 'the second Man from heaven' (1 Cor. xv. 47). It was thence God sent His own Son to be made man (Rom. i. 3; Gal. iv. 4). In heaven He was 'in the form of God' (Phil. ii. 6). He took an active part in the work of Creation. 'To us there is but one God the Father, of Whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom are all things and we by Him'[1]

[1] In this sense, Christ is called in Col. i. 15 'The First-born of all creatures'—*i.e.* existing before any of them were made. We follow the accepted reading, δι' οὗ, but there is another reading, δι' ὅν. 1 Cor. viii. 6 and Rom. xi. 36 clash. Romans tells us: 'For of Him (the Father) and through Him and by Him are all things.'

(1 Cor. viii. 6). It was by the agency of Christ, as God's Mediator, that all things were created. Christ thus stands to God very much in the same relation as the 'Word' or 'Logos' in 'S. John'—*i.e.* it is through Christ that God works and expresses Himself. As bearing on Christ's pre-existence, we should also perhaps mention 1 Cor. x. 4: 'That Rock was Christ.'

In Christ, God and man meet, for Christ is from all eternity the 'Man from heaven,' our Archetype, the Head of the whole human race. Mankind was already in Him before the creation of the world. If we may use the Platonic phrase, He is man's 'idea.' In Him man has *ideally* always been in the presence of God, in the Godhead. Christ is thus our perfect representative and pattern. He can act in our stead, and His acts are ours. We are also His 'fulness,' and without us He cannot realise His full self-expression (Eph. i. 23).

Christ's Holy Spirit.

It was by His Resurrection, so Rom. i. 4 tells us, that 'Jesus Christ our Lord, made of the seed of David according to the flesh, was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of Holiness.'

This Spirit of Holiness is always and eternally His. The Prophets had foretold that Messiah should have the fulness of God's Spirit (*e.g.* Isa. xi. 2; xlii. 1; lxi. 1). S. Paul constantly identifies Christ and the Spirit. 'The Lord is that Spirit.' 'The second Adam was made a quickening Spirit.' In Rom. viii. 9 'the Spirit of God' and 'the Spirit of Christ' are used as convertible terms. Thus the Spirit of Christ is not of a different and lower order. It is one and the same with the Spirit of God.

Even in the flesh Christ had the Spirit of Holiness. It was by virtue of His Holy Spirit that He overcame the sinful principle in our flesh which He took upon Himself with all its sinful tendencies. It is by this same Spirit of Christ in ourselves, through vital union with Him, that we can lead a sinless life.

This Spirit He could not impart to others till after His Resurrection. It was only then that He Himself 'was declared to be the Son of God *with power*, according to the Spirit of Holiness.' While He was in the flesh the Spirit's power was limited, had not free scope. For His perfect self-expression, both as Son and life-giving Spirit, Christ required not only the Spirit of Holiness as His inward personality, but this inward Man clothed upon with a corresponding Spirit-Body. This could not be till after His Resurrection. Before that moment Christ's Spirit was hampered by His Flesh-Body.

Just as it was by His Resurrection that Christ's Sonship (*υἱότης*) was made complete, so it is with us. Paul has boldly told us that 'Christ is the first-born of all creatures' (Col. i. 15), thus apparently merging Christ in His own Creation; so he now calls Christ 'the first-born among many brethren' (Rom. viii. 29). He is this in two senses. Christ, our Head, was the first Man to put off this fleshly body and put on the heavenly Spirit-body. In so doing He was also the first to complete His Sonship. Thus He leads the way for all others after Him. They, in their resurrection, will likewise put on the spirit-body, and also become fully 'sons of God.'

Christ's Atoning Death.

'He died for our sins' (1 Cor. xv. 3). The Death both (*a*) covers our sins, and (*b*) frees us from sin's power. That is to say, it both justifies and sanctifies us.

(A) *Expiatory.* Christ's Death is a death 'on our behalf' (ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν) or 'on our account' (περὶ ἡμῶν). Its significance is expressed in a variety of ways according to the various points of view from which Paul approaches it. He multiplies his phrases and metaphors in speaking of it.

e.g. *Sacrifice.* The wages of sin is death. Nothing but Death for death due as a penalty for man's sin would satisfy God's justice—*i.e.* all men must die (Rom. v. 12; viii. 2; 1 Cor. xv. 22)—or their equivalent. The death of all would show forth God's justice, but not His grace. If (as in Abraham's case) God Himself provides the Lamb for the sacrifice, while the Victim also gladly surrenders His own life for us, then both God's justice and His Love are manifest (Rom. iii. 25; 1 Cor. v. 7; 2 Cor. v. 19; Rom. v. 8).

Redemption: Ransom (1 Cor. vi. 20; vii. 23; Gal. iv. 5). By His Death Christ pays in full our purchase-money, freeing us from our slavery to sin, and from the bondage of the Law, which cursed those who did not fully obey it (Gal. iii. 10-13). We are bought with the price of Christ's blood.

Reconciliation. Our sin is enmity or rebellion against God. It creates a gulf of man's own making between God and man. Men are spoken of as God's enemies (Rom. v. 10; *cf.* viii. 7), but God is never spoken of as the enemy of man. On the contrary, He does not need to be appeased. He invites man to be 'at one' with

Him. 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their sins unto them.' The Atonement is the provision God Himself has made for the removal of the barrier sin has created between man and Himself (2 Cor. v. 18-21; Rom. v. 1-11).

Justification (Rom. v. 12-21). This is a juristic idea. God appears as Judge and Lawgiver. The Law, which is the expression of the Divine Will, has been transgressed by sinful man. God has a 'charge' (ἔγκλημα) against him, and condemns him. But of His grace and by virtue of the Death of Christ, instead of pronouncing verdict of 'guilty,' God 'justifieth the ungodly,' and lets Christ take our sin while we take His righteousness.

Under this heading we do hear of the wrath or anger of God (*e.g.* Rom. i. 18; v. 9; ix. 22; Col. iii. 6; Eph. ii. 3, etc.), but God's wrath has nothing in it of the feeling of personal irritation, pique or resentment which we associate with human wrath. It is that pure divine indignation, the righteous moral aversion to sin and hatred of it as an offence against Love, a 'wrath' which God must manifest or cease to be God. Christ in His Death 'propitiates' this wrath.

When we are told that Christ was 'made a curse for us,' 'made sin for us' (Gal. iii. 13; 2 Cor. v. 21), we are not to understand that He was personally accursed or sinful. He was accursed inasmuch as He suffered the accursed death of Crucifixion, for Deuteronomy says: 'He that is hanged is accursed of God' (xxi. 23). Similarly, He 'was made sin for us' is only a powerful expression for: 'God treated Him as if He were actually a sinner, because He took our sin upon Him.' The

whole idea is sacrificial, and perhaps also reminiscent of the 'scapegoat' on the Day of Atonement.

(B) *Renovating power of Christ's Death.* It brings us into *vital union* with Christ's life-giving Spirit, so that we are now 'dead unto sin and live unto God' (Rom. vi. 3-10; Gal. ii. 20; Eph. ii. 5-6; Col. iii. 3). We are not only reckoned righteous, but becoming righteous in ourselves. We are called to be saints, and must live as saints, or the Spirit of Christ is not in us and we are none of His. We are sons of God and must render Him loving filial obedience. We have passed from death unto life; eternal life is ours, and even here we must live the heavenly life that is to be ours fully at our resurrection.

Thus the Death has both an objective and subjective side. On its objective side, it does something for us: justifies us, puts us on a new footing with God. On its subjective side, it does something in us: transforms us into new men. Paul starts with the sacrificial or 'substitute' idea of the Death, but looking back upon the marvellous change effected in his own heart and character by this manifestation of the Love of God and His Christ, he passes from the idea of Christ as our mere 'scapegoat' to the sanctifying power of Christ's Death. The Death makes us one with Christ, establishes a vital union which enables Him to pour Himself into us and mould us ever more and more into His own perfect character and likeness by His Spirit acting on our spirit. 'He died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him Which died for them and rose again. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new

creature: old things are passed away; all things are become new' (2 Cor. v. 15, 17). The enabling power to live this life is Christ's indwelling Spirit: 'It is no more I that live, but Christ that liveth in me.' The motive, prompting us to live this new life, is love. 'The love of Christ constraineth us.' The supreme manifestation of the Love of God and His Christ on the Cross awakens in us such a sense of love and gratitude that we feel we owe ourselves body, mind and soul to God henceforth. For us to continue in sin is now a moral impossibility. We so identify ourselves with Christ that His Will is our will.

Christ's Intercession for us.

'It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, Who is even at the right hand of God, Who also maketh intercession for us' (Rom. viii. 34).

Christ's Second Coming.

'In the day of the Lord' (*e.g.* 1 Cor. i. 8), or the day of 'His coming' (1 Cor. i. 7), Christ will come again in Glory, with His angels (2 Thess. i. 7-9). In a moment, like 'a thief in the night,' will He appear (1 Thess. v. 2). 'The trumpet shall sound' and there will be a general Resurrection of the dead (1 Cor. xv. 52). 'The dead in Christ shall rise first, then we which are alive shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we be ever with the Lord' (1 Thess. iv. 16-17). All men assemble before Christ for *Judgment*, 'that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad' (2 Cor. v. 10). The Judgment is sometimes called a judgment *of God* (*e.g.* Rom. ii. 3), sometimes *of Christ* (2 Cor.

v. 10), sometimes *of God through Christ* (Rom. ii. 16). In some passages unbelievers are said to be 'punished with everlasting destruction' (2 Thess. i. 9), while elsewhere we are told 'all shall be made alive in Christ' (1 Cor. xv. 22), or that 'by Christ God reconciles all things unto Himself, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven' (Col. i. 20)—thus pointing to universal salvation.

Paul's eschatology is very difficult, because it varies so in different Epistles and is not always self-consistent nor in harmony with other parts of his theology. He could not shake himself altogether free from the apocalyptic views current in his day, even when he had advanced far beyond them. In his later Epistles his eschatological views have undergone a radical change and become far more sober and spiritualised. We shall come back to this subject later (chapter xxv.).

CHAPTER XIX

GRACE AND FAITH

Grace. The root-idea of 'grace'—χάρις (χαίρω)='to do one a pleasure'—is an act of good will and loving-kindness on the part of the doer which fills the heart of him for whom the act is done with gratitude, joy and gladness. It is a beautiful word-picture. It vividly portrays the spontaneous character of the kind action; the pure goodness of heart which prompts it; the recognition on the part of the man who benefits by it that he has not the very least claim or right to it; his feelings of joy and gratitude.

This lovely word had long been in use in classical Greek, from the days of Homer downwards, yet strange to say, as Cremer well points out, it was left to Christianity to bring out its full significance and 'to elevate it to its rightful sphere.' Indeed, Christianity has borrowed from classical Greek the words 'grace' (χάρις) and 'faith' (πίστις) and given them a meaning so full and rich that it has made these two words all its own. As soon as either the one or the other is mentioned, it at once calls up to the mind of the reader, without any further hint, the picture of God's infinite love as manifested in our Lord Jesus Christ.

S. Paul in his Epistles speaks sometimes of the

'grace of God' (Rom. v. 15; 1 Cor. xv. 10; 2 Cor. vi. 1; viii. 1), sometimes of 'the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ' (2 Cor. xiii. 14; viii. 9). Sometimes both are combined—*e.g.* 'Grace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ' (Rom. i. 7; 1 Cor. i. 3; 2 Cor. i. 2). But the word 'grace' has already so well established itself as a well-known expression that it constantly stands alone with no further hint of Whose 'grace' it is. It has become a technical Christian term which needs no further definition. It means God's saving grace in Jesus Christ, our Father's loving-kindness to us sinners as revealed in His Son. It speaks to us of the Divine Love, which, in the Person of the Son of God, 'emptied itself' (Phil. ii. 5 *sqq.*; 2 Cor. viii. 9) at the Incarnation, and fathomed the unfathomable depths of self-sacrifice in the Atonement[1] (*cf.* Gal. ii. 20). It speaks of a love so deep that God is not only ready to stoop to the lowest depths of humiliation for our sake, but to take up His abode in us and raise us up to Himself, to pour His own love and strength into our hearts, if only we will rest our implicit trust in Him and give Him our own love. He asks for nothing but this love and trust of ours in return. All else is a pure gift on His part, which God offers to us if only we will reach out our hand to receive it all.

Thus God's 'grace' is manifested not only at the supreme moments of the Incarnation and the Atonement, but every single blessing, every single step we take in our Christian life is due to the pure 'grace' of God. It is through it that the call comes to man to

[1] The chief quality in this act of self-sacrifice is not pity or mere compassion, it is the Love of a Father yearning for the love of His children.

open his heart to God (Gal. i. 15), and through grace it is that man is made willing to respond to this call. It is the grace of God, again, that gives us the faith (Eph. i. 19; Phil. i. 29) which assures us of the love of God (Rom. v. 5; viii. 15-16) and awakens our own love towards Him (2 Thess. iii. 5), thus enabling us to lay hold of Christ and enter into that vital union with Him which ends by making us like Him. So it is that when Paul wishes to gather up into one single word all his wishes and hopes and prayers for his beloved converts, he says: 'The *grace* of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.' There is not a single blessing which God 'in the riches of His grace' is not longing 'to pour as a gift into the lap of the Christian soul,' as it has been aptly phrased.

But if God does everything and we do nothing, where does the moral element in man come in? Is he a mere dummy?

S. Paul is clear and emphatic as to 'grace.' In his eyes, man lies in such a corrupt and helpless condition, sin has so paralysed him, that God must quicken him into life, even as at the creation, enable him both to will and to do, before he can take one single step Godwards. God must come to the man and do everything for him, he can do nothing for himself. The very words used by S. Paul and 'S. John'—'new creature,' 'new birth'—emphasise this fact. A man can no more create a new heart and new life in himself than he can be the cause of his own birth or existence.

At the same time, when we come to deal with 'Faith,' we shall see that Paul does recognise a human factor in the renewal of heart in the believer. Just as

Ezekiel says of God : 'I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you' (xi. 19), yet a few chapters farther he also says : 'Make you a new heart and a new spirit' (xviii. 31), so it is, in a lesser degree, with Paul.

We have seen that Paul regards every single step in the growth of the Christian life—our call, our faith, our justification, our sanctification—as entirely due to the grace of God, yet Paul is no less ready to use language which implies that man must do his share, as well as God. '*Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.*' The words which immediately follow this injunction, 'for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to work for His good pleasure' (Phil. ii. 12-13, R.V.), show how clearly Paul emphasises the truth that the initiative always lies with God, but man must co-operate.

Paul wants to exclude all possibility of self-complacency or boasting on man's part. He insists, and truly insists, that the really righteous man is never self-righteous. 'What hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?' Yet no one can possibly steep himself in the spirit of Paul's Epistles without seeing that all through, from first to last, they clearly teach us that God's grace does not exclude man's freedom of action. The believer claims no merit whatsoever for his faith, yet his faith has a distinct moral worth. It presupposes a receptive heart, and this is of the highest value in God's eyes. It means that implicit humble trust in God which leans on Him entirely, conscious that in God's Love is its one hope.

Now such an attitude of heart is essentially acceptable in God's eyes, for it does justice to God's whole character. It is the only thing the sinner has to offer, but God welcomes that spirit and accepts it right gladly. It is a mere widow's mite. The sinner, in his poverty, has nothing else to give but self-surrendering trust in God's goodness. He gives to God all that he has, next to nothing, but in God's eyes that little is of great price.

Paul's theology, as we have said over and over again, is based on his living experience, his personal knowledge of Christ. How, then, did he arrive at this conception of God's Gospel of 'grace'? Need we ask? It was when God revealed His Son in him and caused a great light to shine in the darkness of Paul's heart on the road to Damascus.

And how dark it was just then in Paul's heart! For years and years had he been trying, so zealously, to work out his own righteousness. 'Keep the commandments,' said Judaism, this is God's one appointed way to righteousness. Paul kept them as no man kept them (Gal. i. 14), only to find that 'the commandment which was unto life was unto death' (Rom. vii. 10) so far as he was concerned. Instead of the righteousness he so earnestly sought, all he found at the end of his years and years of honest active search was an accusing conscience. Absolute failure stared him in the face.

As if to fill to the brim his bitter cup, all unconsciously he found himself even fighting against the God he so longed to serve. He furiously persecuted the Christian Church, and, through it, Christ Himself, God's Messiah.

Can we imagine his feelings when he, Christ's bitterest enemy, saw the face of the Christ in his vision, and realised that the Jesus Whom he had been persecuting all along was none other than Messiah Himself? And when he heard the voice saying: 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? I am Jesus of Nazareth Whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks,' what echo did these searching and reproachful but essentially loving and tender words awaken in his heart?

What was the look he saw in the Christ's Face? Anger against one who had been blaspheming His Name and persecuting His Church? No, or the revelation would have been to Paul, not a blessing but a curse, still further deepening his self-condemnation. That it meant mercy and blessing to Paul, resulting not in terror and despair, but in his immediate and joyful conversion to Christianity, was due to the fact that it was in His infinite Love that Jesus revealed Himself to him. 'The Son of God *loved* me and gave Himself for me' (Gal. ii. 20). No wonder that the keynote of his whole gospel is 'The love of Christ constraineth us'; no wonder that Paul's is essentially a gospel of 'grace.'

Faith. From cover to cover of the Bible the root-idea of faith is to lean upon God in absolute security and trustfulness with firm and unwavering confidence, happen what may. Perhaps one of the best definitions of faith is that given in Heb. xi. 6: 'Without faith it is impossible to please God; for he that cometh to Him must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.'

Like 'grace,' faith empties itself of all self-righteous-

ness whatsoever. It puts forward no claim on God's goodness and favour, no plea of personal merit of any kind. It casts itself without reserve upon God's grace alone as its one hope, but it is an assured hope. Freed from all illusion of earthly help, and above all from all trust in self, faith is a complete self-surrender to God, with devoted, confident trust in Him as Guide and Saviour, a firm and unshaken conviction in Him that He is all that is good and has our own best good at heart.

Humility, reverence, love, confidence, all these are essential qualities of implicit trusting faith. *Humility*, because, in faith, we unreservedly cast ourselves upon God as our one hope, in that truly humble spirit which owns that of ourselves we have nothing, are nothing, wish to be nothing, but must receive everything from God. *Reverence*, because such implicit trust in God's good will and loving-kindness shows that we cherish in our hearts a true and high conception of God, think right thoughts about Him, do justice to His character. *Love*, because the mere fact that we thus instinctively turn to God as our best Friend proves that we have that perfect love towards Him which casteth out fear. Even though others may despise us as we despise ourselves, we *know* He loves us still. *Confidence*, because of the conviction in our hearts that God is so good, loving, strong and wise that He not only seeks our best good, but is more than able to perform it.

Clearly, then, faith is mainly a matter of the heart. 'With the heart man believeth unto righteousness.' *There* is its home, and thence it goes forth and leavens the whole man, his affections, his will, his thoughts.

Love is faith's dominant quality. 'Faith which worketh through love' (Gal. v. 6). It calls forth all our love towards God and His Christ (Rom. v. 8; Gal. ii. 20). It also purifies our will and bends it to the Will of God in a spirit of self-surrendering submission, thus producing what S. Paul aptly calls 'the obedience of faith' (Rom. i. 5; *cf.* Rom. x. 3, 16; 2 Cor. x. 5; Rom. vi. 16, 17). This act of obedience consists in renouncing everything of our own, our natural gifts, our privileges, our so-called virtues or good deeds, anything and everything that flatters our self-love and weans us from a complete self-surrender to Christ. This is what Paul means by his words: 'What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. I do count them but dung, so that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith in Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.' That is to say, Paul might easily have been proud of God's special revelations to him, the extraordinary 'gifts' bestowed upon him, his immense work for God in converting the Gentile world, and so forth. Instead of finding ground for self-glorification in these things, he looks upon them rather as a loss and not a gain, for the temptation comes through them to put self and good works between himself and God's grace. Therefore he bends his will to God's Will, and renounces them all. He will have none of these things stand in the way of a complete self-surrender to Christ. He wants to be nothing and have nothing of himself, but to receive all from God through Christ (Phil. iii. 7 *sqq.*; *cf.* 2 Cor. xii.).

Faith also appeals to our thoughts, our understanding. 'Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God' (Rom. x. 17). 'How shall they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a preacher?' (x. 14). Faith in Christ assumes that we know and believe in His Death and Resurrection as true historical facts.[1] Paul himself openly avows that the belief in the Resurrection of Jesus as a historical fact is the foundation of his faith: 'If Christ be not risen from the dead, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins' (1 Cor. xv. 17). 'If thou believest in thine heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, thou shalt be saved' (Rom. x. 9).

But we have utterly failed to catch the spirit of Paul if we for one moment fancy that he laid any stress whatever on the saving power of a head-knowledge of Christ. The Resurrection of Christ meant for Paul a great deal more than a mere fact of history. The historical fact of the Resurrection derives all its importance for him from one consideration, and one only. 'By the Resurrection, Jesus was declared to be the Son of God with power' (Rom. i. 4). There and then God Himself set His seal to Christ's Messiahship and proved Christ to be His Son and our Lord. That is to say, the Resurrection proved at one stroke that He Who died on the Cross was none other than God Himself in the Person of His Son. It was the clearest possible manifestation of God's Love and good will towards us, and, as such, appealed not to our heads

[1] *Cf.* Gwatkin's: 'The Gospel is a revelation of the eternal through facts of time.' We do not forget Lessing's famous *dictum*: 'Events of time cannot prove eternal truth.'

but to our hearts, constraining us to love Him Who so loved us, and to surrender ourselves unreservedly to a God so ready thus to sacrifice Himself for our sakes.

Thus even when Paul seems to say that faith appeals to our heads, it is a matter of the heart. Rom. x. 9, which we quoted a moment ago, puts this beyond a shadow of a doubt. 'If thou believest *in thine heart* that God raised Jesus from the dead, thou shalt be saved.' Assent to the Word of God as true undoubtedly enters into faith as one of its factors, but it is not a mere head-belief in God's existence and justice and goodness or a mere head-knowledge that God's Word and promises are true. In this sense Paul would have fully endorsed James's words: 'Thou believest that there is one God, thou doest well; *the devils also believe, and tremble*' (James ii. 19).

Faith will, of course, gladly embrace with humble confidence all the gracious promises of God. It will readily lay hold on all those revealed truths concerning God and His Christ which the Bible proclaims. These promises are the source of faith's life and strength, while it is on the revealed truths of the Gospel of glad tidings that it grounds its steadfast trust.

But Faith goes behind these promises and truths. It reposes its trust, not on the promises themselves, but on Him Who gave them. It clings, not to the propositions which declare God's loving grace or Christ's saving work, but to God Himself, our loving Father, and to Christ our Saviour, Who can save to the uttermost.

Paul tells us this in so many words: 'When ye received the Word of God, ye received it not as the

Word *of men*, but, as it is in truth, the Word *of God*, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.' It was not the words you read or heard that built up your faith, it was God Himself, Who was in and behind those words and reached you through them.

One word more. Paul constantly tells us that we are 'saved through faith,' but this is a very different thing from saying that faith has any saving power in itself. The Jews of Paul's day viewed 'faith' as a highly meritorious action in itself. Thus a passage in Rabbinical literature tells us: 'Rabbi Nehemiah says: "Whosoever receives unto himself one precept of the Law in true faith *is worthy for the Holy Spirit to abide upon him.*" Great is faith before God, for on account of faith it is that the Holy Spirit abides upon us.'

In the interests of spiritual religion Paul was bound to wage uncompromising war against such a meritorious conception of faith as that. It was only another form of self-salvation. Therefore he insists that it is not *faith* that saves, but faith in God, or, as Paul puts it, 'faith in Christ,' since it is through His Incarnate Son that God reveals His infinite Love for us. It is not even quite true to say that 'faith in Christ saves us,' it is Christ Who saves us through faith.

'A man is not justified save through faith in Jesus Christ' does not mean that our faithful attitude of heart, our receptivity, is in itself so good and virtuous that God, well pleased with this meritorious act on our part, pours all His blessings upon us because of this virtue in us. If Paul could for one moment have thought or said such a thing, he would himself be doing the very thing he is trying to undo, the one

thing which he always condemns. His whole quarrel with Judaism springs from the Jewish belief that we can become good and righteous through our own good qualities or meritorious acts. Now, if he attached any notion of merit to faith, he would be copying the Jews and turning it into a new kind of good work, and saying like them: 'Great is faith, for it makes us worthy for the Holy Spirit to abide upon us.' As a matter of fact, Paul refuses, and emphatically refuses, to give even the smallest fraction of the credit of our salvation to any one or anything but God's grace as manifested in Jesus Christ. What Paul does say is: 'By grace ye are saved.' Even this is not enough. He hedges it round so as not to leave even the tiniest loophole for self-righteousness. Three verses later he repeats it in this way: 'For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast.'

Paul does not leave an inch of room for any self-righteousness of our own. From beginning to end our salvation is due simply to the goodness of God, Who showed His infinite Love for us sinners in the Death of His Son Jesus Christ, 'Who was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification' (Rom. v. 8; iv. 25). Outside this, nothing avails. Good works, personal gifts, Jewish privileges—faith itself—establish no claims on God. Jew and Gentile, Greek and Barbarian, so-called good men and bad men are all without distinction exactly in the same position. All alike must accept their salvation as the pure gift of God through faith in Christ.

As has been well said: 'This is the charter of

Christian liberty for all time. It frees us from all legalism in religion with its treadmill service, its fear and gloom and uncertainty; from all laborious self-salvation, whether by religious ceremonial, or by orthodox opinions, or by the magic power even of sacraments.'

Thus faith is the gracious channel through which we are not only reckoned righteous before God, but enabled to become righteous. It becomes a bond connecting man with God through Christ. Man links himself in loving trust with Christ as his Lord and Saviour, and the two are one in vital union. 'He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit' (1 Cor. vi. 17). We know what this means. We start with pardon (justification) and end in holiness (sanctification). Our spiritual evolution has begun with our 'new creation.' It will not stop, unless we ourselves check it, till we are transformed into Christ's own likeness.

CHAPTER XX

JUSTIFICATION, SANCTIFICATION; OR CHRIST'S OWN VIEW OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HIS DEATH

IN previous chapters we have so often spoken of these terms and their Pauline meaning that little remains to be said. All we can do here is briefly to sum up their Pauline significance by translating them into modern language.

Justification (see chapter xvi., 'Righteousness of God' *sub finem*, and chapter xviii., 'The Atoning Death of Christ,' p. 222 *sq.*).

Paul's use of the word presupposes an estrangement between man and God. On man's side this gulf between the two is the direct consequence of his sin. On God's side it is the direct consequence of His righteous and holy Love. Because He is holy and loves His children He cannot wink at the sin which hurts them so, for it poisons their whole character, robs them of that love to their Father and towards each other which alone can work out their true happiness, and replaces this love by a spirit of selfishness, bringing endless wrongs and sufferings in its train.

Thus the barrier between God and man, keeping them wide apart, out of touch, is entirely of man's own making. This estrangement is an unnatural state of

things, for it is like the behaviour of a bad son who hates his good father and is not on speaking terms with him, and it sorely pains our loving Father's heart. Such a condition of things does not enter into God's eternal plan at all. It is man's bad work thwarting all His programme for the best good and happiness of man. God is deeply pained and grieved, and does not wish or mean this bad state of things to continue.

As we have seen, Paul tells us that, because of their sins, 'God's wrath is revealed from heaven against all this ungodliness and unrighteousness of men' (Rom. i. 18). Men are spoken of as His enemies (Rom. v. 10; viii. 7), sadly in need of reconciliation with Him (Rom. v. 10; xi. 15; 2 Cor. v. 18 *sqq.*; Col. i. 21). This seems to preach Calvinism, but it does nothing of the kind. 'The wrath of God' has nothing of personal irritation or resentment in it. It is always, in God, that pure feeling of grief and righteous indignation which even a good man must feel in the presence of all that offends against Love. Similarly, when men are spoken of as God's enemies, it is man who is in a state of rebellion against God, for our Father is never spoken of as man's enemy; on the contrary, He is always represented as loving him with all the love of a mother to a wayward child. Once more, when God invites us to be reconciled with Him, there is not a shadow of a suggestion of a God Who is so angry with sinful man that He is reluctant to forgive him. It is all the other way. It is man who is reluctant to be reconciled with God. God has to make all the advances in His longing to win man's love back to Himself. He so loves man, His child, that there is no depth

of humiliation to which He will not stoop, no self-sacrifice He does not gladly make, to wean His child from his hatred of Him and win back his love. 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.'

But if sin is that awful thing which hates and despises God's goodness, hugs self and thrusts all love of God and of our brother man on one side, and so hurts God, hurts mankind at large, hurts the sinner himself, how can God forgive it and welcome back the sinner to Himself? How can He possibly do this and yet be a holy and loving God?

At first sight there seems to be only one way. If God does not wipe out the sinner, as he richly deserves, in the same way as we kill a poisonous snake, He must wink at sin, forgive the sinner on very easy terms, or no terms at all, and trust to chance that he will mend his ways.

The God of the Old Testament Who wipes out all mankind by a Flood is represented as adopting something like the first method, while much of the sentimental teaching so common nowadays about a God Who is all Love, and can never find it in His heart to punish the wicked, goes perilously near to the second alternative. Neither the one nor the other appeals to our conscience as the true idea of God. A God Who rules by fear we may obey, but never really love. A God Who offers forgiveness on too easy terms, and by an act of special favour, offends against our sense of justice and seems to be doing a grievous wrong, even to the sinner himself. God must seek the good of all His children impartially; the good of those who do evil, as well as the good of those who do good. But to

let a man who does evil, and so long as he does evil, go scot-free, is no kindness at all.[1] Reproof and punishment is the only form love can take.

But is there no third alternative? Is there no other way to save the sinner from himself than either to wreak arbitrary punishment upon him or let him go scot-free? God knows there is, and so does Paul.

Paul's doctrine of sinful flesh is not flattering to human vanity, but it is not a doctrine of total unredeemed badness. It recognises a factor in every human heart which is good: 'I delight in the Law of God after the inner man.' It may be a weak motive, but it is there. In his heart of hearts every man seeks good and loves God. It is only because God is so great and man so small, because narrow and hard is the way to goodness, and broad and easy is the road which we tread in following our own sweet will and the pull of our appetites, that all men forsake the good and do the bad.

Man is not all blind, neither is he all unkind. There is in man a healthy spot left, and God knows that, if He can lay hold on this, He can work a complete cure and heal the man of the whole disease of sin. A close student of human nature has well said: 'The one way to cure a bad man is to bring to bear on him the influence of some one whom he loves, and make him see how his evil deeds grieve the person who loves him so and who has made such great sacrifices on his behalf.'

[1] *e.g.* Socrates in Plato's *Gorgias*: 'I maintain that he who has done wrong and is not punished is and ought to be the most miserable of all men. The doer of the wrong is more miserable than the sufferer, and he who escapes punishment more miserable than he who suffers.'

Here we have God's whole scheme of salvation as outlined by Paul. 'God commendeth His own Love towards us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.' 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their sins unto them.' 'The love of Christ constraineth us.'

What is the picture Paul gives us here? The Portrait of a loving Father Who sees His children through their sin—that is, their lack of love—inflicting grievous wrong on themselves, and cruel wrong and suffering on their brothers and sisters, members of His great family. In His great warm heart, overflowing with Love, God longs to heal the wounds the sinner has done to his own soul and to the souls of others. He craves to welcome back His straying child to His Father's heart. In the Person of His Son God Himself becomes one of us, enters a world full of hypocrisy, pride, hatred and selfishness. Innocent as Christ is, He has to share in a sinful world the wrongs and sufferings sin brings in its train even upon the guiltless. At last He is brought to death, simply because He is a good man in an evil world. He loved man, and in seeking man's best good won his hatred. He came to His own so as to save them, and they put Him to death.

In this way only could God show forth to man His Infinite Love for him. To be complete, forgiveness must be incarnate. It requires in its bearer a human heart, living close enough to the sinner to make him feel ashamed of his sin in the presence of the goodness there at his side. Thus alone can a sinful Peter be brought to exclaim: 'Depart from me,

O Lord, for I am a sinful man.' It wants a human heart full of the spirit of self-sacrificing love to win the man's own grateful love and spur him to a life of love and service.

God knows it is only through man we can know Him, so He comes to us in His Incarnate Son as a Man.

Let us read Paul's words of Justification in this light. Then we shall understand how He Who forgives must share the suffering sin brings with it. We shall see that sin is no light thing to a God Who fathomed the unfathomable depths of Love, humiliation and self-sacrifice to eradicate it, and that He certainly does not wink at sin. We shall realise that a forgiveness which springs from such infinite Love must awaken love, gratitude, and a life of devoted service to Him Who so loved us.

Paul's views of the Atonement may be crudely expressed. We may be out of touch with his idea of a Christ Who takes our sins upon Himself and gives us His righteousness in exchange, as if His righteousness and our sin were garments that could be transferred from the one to the other. We may still ask how a *physical* Death of Christ on the Cross is a *sine qua non*, an essential condition to our forgiveness in God's eyes and the new moral and spiritual life in us which follows in its train. We may even ask why eternal love requires any expiation at all. Let us confine ourselves to the last question: Does God require Christ's expiation before He can forgive?[1]

[1] Readers are requested to read 'Antinomies of S. Paul' (Appendix) *pari passu* with what follows. It is written six months later.

Christ's own view of the significance of His Death[1]

The statements of our Lord Himself on this subject are strangely scanty, and must in each case be interpreted by their context and the general tenor of His whole Life and Teaching. A careful reading of the Gospels shows that it is only towards the end of His Life that He dwells on His Death at all. He was convinced that He was the Messiah and the revealer to men of God as a Father of infinite love and tenderness. His one aim was to awaken in men's hearts an answering love to God and to each other, and thus inaugurate on earth God's Kingdom of love and self-sacrificing Service. In His own Person He stands as the revealer and interpreter of God and of His own Gospel in terms of the highest and holiest experience we know—that of self-sacrificing, out-going Love stemming the evil of the world, leavening it with a new good spirit; looking upon every human soul, however depraved, as a child of God, beloved and sacred in His sight; sharing the burden of the sinner's sin, longing to bear it all; appealing to him to be a better man, a fellow-worker with Himself to save his fellow-men.

He comes to His own and they receive Him not. In trying to win back God's children to their gracious

[1] The present writer knows that critics of a certain school will seize upon this passage and chapter xxiv. and 'gibbet' him accordingly. He has counted the cost, and what he has written he has written at the dictate of conscience. He only asks to be judged as a whole, not on isolated passages.

Father, a Father Who is not angry with them and longing to punish them, but yearning for their love, Christ meets with nothing but rebuff. He loves the world with an undying love, and tries to do it all the good He can, and only wins its hate. His very spirit of loving service and self-sacrificing humility is entirely misunderstood and despised. As time goes on, the opposition ripens into a bitter hatred which threatens His Life. Selfishness and the world-spirit of evil array themselves against Him in all their might. Even His chosen Twelve are rapt in self. James and John clamour for the highest places in His Kingdom. The other disciples resent the request as an attempt to obtain an undue advantage over them. So long as Christ lives they buoy themselves up with a hope of a material, earthly Messianic Kingdom ; they will not understand that it is a spiritual Kingdom of love, righteousness, peace, joy and unselfishness, where the greatest is he that serves.

One thing, and one thing only, He now clearly sees, can wean His disciples from these wrong and earthly ideas ; one thing only can avail to draw the world, in spite of itself, to follow in His steps—His Death. He knows that the world is not all bad, all unloving. There is good in every human heart. He will break down this dead wall of opposition, He will win His way to their hearts by a supreme act of love and service to them, He will gladly welcome that Death which the evil of the world forces upon Him. He is sure that this object-lesson of self-renouncing, holy love will and must triumph over the world's selfishness. It will redound to the good of His own disciples, for

all their earthly ideas and ideals will be done away with, and they will understand at last what he has vainly endeavoured to teach them hitherto. His Spirit will henceforth be theirs. His self-sacrifice will win the world, for He has implicit faith in the good that is in man, and the world-spirit of selfishness will be broken when men see how He has overcome evil with good and outdone their wickedness by an act of perfect love even unto death. 'S. John' sees what the Synoptists and Paul did not see, the true and deeper meaning of 'I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.' 'Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.'

If we bear this in mind, Christ's words on the subject of His own Death will be read in a new light. As already hinted, these sayings are surprisingly few, and do not seem to bear out the doctrines of Atonement based upon them. Indeed, such an interpretation is out of keeping with the whole Portrait of the Father Christ came to reveal. This Father is ever a God of infinite Love, only waiting to be gracious, longing to embrace His children, not a God full of wrath Who cannot be appeased or propitiated till He has put His own Innocent Son to death.

The nearest approach to such teaching on Christ's lips is in the words of the Institution of the Lord's Supper: 'This is My Blood of the new covenant shed for many for the remission of sins,' Matt. xxvi. 28 (*cf.* Luke xxiv. 47). This was written by S. Matthew not earlier than twenty years after 1 Cor. xi. 20 *sqq.* There Paul gives Christ's words as: 'This Cup is the new covenant in My Blood.' He omits 'shed for the remission of sins'

altogether. Why? These words, if he had known of them, would exactly have coincided with and supported Paul's own views of the expiatory sacrifice.

There is, of course, the famous passage, S. Mark x. 45: 'The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and *to give His Life a ransom for many*.' Both the meaning and authenticity of these last words have long been a very open question. S. Paul in 1 Cor. xi. 24, 'My Body, which is (broken?) for you' (ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν), may support the general gist of Mark x. 45.

Now what do these passages tell us? Precisely what we have already said. Our Lord is convinced that it is only by a supreme exhibition of His unfathomable love that He can break the power of evil and selfishness in the world, and so inaugurate the Kingdom of God.[1] Men are enslaved, wedded to sin and selfishness. Christ gives His Life to set them free; not to deliver them merely from the *consequences* of sin, but from sin in themselves, to make them love and long for righteousness. He does it in the only way

[1] *Cf.* Burkitt's 'Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen' (*Third International Congress of Religions, Oxford*, vol. ii. pp. 321-28), where he shows that Mark x. 45 and the Eucharist words hang together with the parable. In the parable it is the son's murder by the husbandmen that precipitates the new order of things—*i.e.* the change of tenants. The moral of it, therefore, is that the Death of Jesus will hasten the Kingdom, and with it the Day of the Lord. But this Day of the Lord will also mean a day of release and reconciliation for the good. That is, Christ's Death, His Blood shed, will be 'for the good of many' by hastening the Kingdom. Jesus went to His Death believing that He was hastening the Kingdom. *Cf.* Schweitzer's beautiful picture (*Von Reimarus zu Wrede*, chapter xix.) of Jesus predicting that the wheel of the change that will bring in the Kingdom of God is about to turn. The wheel does not turn. Jesus throws Himself on it. It does turn then, and kills Him as it moves. In all this Christ's Death is a real sacrifice, but not for sins in the way that Paul interprets it.

that even God can do it, by drawing them to Himself and away from the world's evil by cords of Love.[1] 'His Cross, borne for Love's sake as the last step in the path of perfect holiness and loving service which He was called to tread, must for all time crucify the world to all who love Him.' The context, 'The Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister,' proves in itself that it is as a supreme act of self-renouncing, loving service that Christ regards His Cross. To press the word 'ransom,'[1] and make it mean that thus only could God be bribed to forgive mankind, is to give the lie to Christ's picture of God and our own highest conceptions of Him. In that hard light the parable of the Prodigal Son is meaningless.

So with the words 'This Cup is the new covenant in My Blood.' In these words Christ clearly refers to the sealing of the old covenant with God on Sinai by Moses. 'Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you' (Exod. xxiv. 6-9). Just as Christ, in the Sermon on the Mount, is a second and greater Moses, the new Lawgiver, so He is here the Mediator of a new Covenant replacing the Mosaic Covenant. At Sinai, Moses had sealed it with a sacrifice and the sprinkling of blood, so now Christ seals the 'passover,' the deliverance of God's new people from the bondage of sin and the world into the freedom of the love and service of God, by a sacrifice, the sacrifice

Explain it as we may, it is a moral law that the righteousness and sufferings of good men are a λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν. Ten good men can save Sodom is a fact, so is Exod. xx. 5-6. The goodness and self-sacrifice of the righteous have a redemptive value; they are *Saviours* of their fellows.

of His Death. It establishes a new covenant in the sense that Christ's Death of love will inspire His followers with a new spirit of love, new life, break the power of sin in their hearts, and remove for ever all doubt of their Father's forgiving love.

Throughout Christ's own Life and Teaching He nowhere bases the forgiveness of sins on His own Death. Long before He died, He says to the paralytic: 'Thy sins be forgiven thee.' Forgiveness in His lifetime is freely offered to all who do the Father's Will and forgive in love their brethren's trespasses. There is not one passage to suggest that forgiveness is in any way conditioned by a Death on the Cross still to come. The value of the Cross rests in the Christ-Spirit that lies in and behind it, its inspiring power upon others, not in the mere outward offering of a life as a propitiation to an irate God, or in the suffering it entails.

All these ideas were after-growths. Identifying Christ with the Suffering Servant of Isaiah, the early Church undoubtedly saw in our Lord 'Him Who was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, by Whose stripes we are healed, on Whom the Lord hath laid the iniquity of us all.' This view of it is perfectly and absolutely true, and exactly what we are trying to show, but not in the sense in which the early Church interpreted it. By the time of Paul's earliest Epistles the doctrine of the expiatory, Atoning efficacy of the Death, as the *ground and condition* of the forgiveness of our sins, was already fully elaborated. The only question is how far this is a development or not of Christ's own teaching. We know they misinterpreted Christ's words about His

Second Coming. They believed it was going to be a visible coming in the clouds of the air with the sound of a trumpet, preparatory to a millennium on earth, and in their own lifetime. It would be easy to quote many other instances.

We do not wish for one moment to question the efficacy of the Death of Christ. Any one who thinks so has wholly misread our meaning. Men in every age have borne witness to its sin-delivering power. 'The love of Christ (on the Cross) constraineth us,' for it is the Love of One Whose Spirit of unfathomable devotion to us, and self-sacrifice for our sakes, reveals a God Whose appeal of love to us to be better men we cannot possibly resist. It is this that transfigures every man who has a soul to feel and makes him surrender himself body, mind and soul to the service of his loving Saviour.

All we plead for is that we should not isolate the Death from the Life which precedes it. It is not the Death as such which is a ransom, but the Death as the crowning act of a whole life of self-denying, self-renouncing, loving service. 'The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.' The Fatherhood of God, the self-sacrifice and love of the Son, stand forth just as plainly in the Incarnation. When 'the Word was made Flesh,' God gave a revelation of His Love to man such as none but a God of infinite love could ever have conceived. If this supreme act of self-humiliation on God's part for our sakes does not touch and win the heart of mankind, transfigure human nature to its very core, nothing ever will. The Incarnation not only

includes the Death of the Cross, but, if we may say so with all reverence, is relatively infinitely greater. This is why, as the Bishop of Gibraltar truly says, 'the Incarnation has to-day once more taken its rightful place as being, rather than the Atonement, the central point of Christian doctrine.'

We have focussed our minds so long upon the way in which we are to escape the penalty of our sins and go to heaven, that far too often we have only had eyes to see in Christ's 'ransom for many,' not a deliverance from sin itself, but a deliverance from the consequences of sin. Therefore His Death has been our one theme of adoration. Our thoughts have been man-centred, not God-centred. As Bishop Westcott says: 'We have suffered over-much from the evils of that Africanism which has been dominant in Europe since the days of Augustine'; and its one-sidedness has been the cause of not a few current misconceptions of Christianity, and of many of the objections which have been brought against Christianity itself.

But, it will be urged, Paul, with whom alone we are dealing, thought and taught otherwise. Even if this statement be true, our religion is not the religion of Paul, but of his Master, Christ. 'Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.' This is the only test by which Paul himself asks us to judge his theology.

But did Paul teach otherwise? If we are led by the wording of some of his formulæ, we must say Yes; if we catch his true spirit, No. Hobbes has told us: 'Words are the counters of wise men, but the money of fools.' Long before Hobbes, Paul said the same thing: 'The

letter killeth, it is the Spirit that giveth life.' We shall only arrive at Paul's true gospel when we read it in the light of the deeper spirit that underlies its superficial letter, when we set more value on the eternal truths themselves which he preaches and less on the form of words in which he frames them. His statements about Christ's Death are often couched in such metaphors as 'sacrifice,' 'redemption,' 'ransom,' because he could find no adequate words in which to express the deep truths he was trying to grasp. They are illustrations flung out *towards* the truth as his best means of approximating to it. We can no more accept them *au pied de la lettre* than we can his picture of Sin, or the Second Coming in clouds, or his idea of evil spirits filling the empty spaces of the universe. None the less, we endorse all the articles of Paul's creed in these matters *in principle*, only we phrase and interpret these problems differently in the clearer light of to-day.

But there is much more than this. Paul the Pharisee-Christian may say: The physical Death of Christ our Substitute, saves us. Yes, but Paul the Christ-taught Christian also, and more truly, says: 'The Love of Christ constraineth us' (cf. Rom. v. 8; 2 Cor. v. 19; Gal. ii. 20; v. 6, and p. 244 *sup.*). Paul's own experience tells him it is the answering love called forth in *our own hearts* at the sight of Christ's wondrous self-sacrificing Love for us that saves us,—a Love already revealed at the Incarnation (2 Cor. viii. 9). Paul may at times, as a Jew, insist on the objective efficacy of the Cross (*i.e.* it does something *for* us), but its subjective efficacy (doing something *in* us) is his real revelation.

Paul had learnt in the school of Jesus the lesson of the infinite Love and Fatherhood of God, and He often gives us a picture of a God of Love Who is exactly the Father in the parable of the Prodigal Son. But Paul had also been to another school. He had received from the early Church *its* interpretation of the Cross: 'Christ died for our sins,' in the sense that Jesus was a sin-offering to appease an offended God, and this appealed to Rabbinic Paul.

In his theology Paul combines both the revelation of Christ: 'God is Love,' and the interpretation of the Death given to it by the Twelve: 'Christ died for our sins.' That is to say, Paul tells us almost in the same breath: 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, *not imputing their sins unto them*'—*i.e.* God does not need to be appeased; and yet 'God made Him, Who knew no sin, to be sin and accursed for us' —*i.e.* God does need to be appeased before He will pardon.

Again we repeat, we cannot possibly do without that Cross which Paul makes his central and main theme. 'I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.' It appeals to myriads whom nothing else can touch. It is their supreme object-lesson of the Infinite Love of God. It also clearly reveals to us a Father Who thus alone can wean men from the sins He hates. Therefore on that Cross we see both God's Love and the blackness of sin, and we are instinctively drawn to the one and learn to hate the other.

But this should not keep us from recognising that Paul, and the early Christians, and we ourselves often

lay a stress on the Cross which Christ never did. Neither should it keep us from realising that those who see in the Incarnation, rather than in the Atonement, the supreme manifestation of the Love of God, do adore Christ as their God and Saviour equally with those who pin their faith to Calvary. Calvary is still to them the power of God unto salvation, and will continue to be so to the end of time, only, in their eyes, Bethlehem does not need a Calvary to enhance its manifestation of the Love of God.

We have been compelled to enter into this matter more fully than we intended. The ground on which we have been standing is holy ground, and we should never have set our feet upon it had not our subject forced us to do so. From that moment it was imperative on us to make our position clear, and this could not be done on such a solemn theme in a few words. We hate cant with a holy hatred, but He Who reads the heart knows the reverent spirit in which we have approached this vital question, praying for light and longing to do Him service. We would not willingly wound the most tender susceptibilities, but, if one speaks at all, it is his bounden duty to speak with no uncertain sound, and up to the top of his convictions.

To return to Paul. Three years ago Dr. Sanday wrote: 'S. Paul seems to bar the way between the subsequent history of Christianity and its Founder. He stamped his signature upon Christian theology, and Christianity in its first stage passed through him as its powerful medium. The question is whether Paul left it substantially unchanged, whether it still is

what its Founder intended it to be.' The questions each one of us has to answer for himself in reading Paul's Epistles are these: (1) Are we to follow his letter or his spirit as our guide? Let Paul answer for himself: 'The letter killeth, the spirit giveth life.' (2) When Paul and Jesus clash, which are we to follow? 'Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ' (1 Cor. iii. 11). (3) Does Paul claim for his theology that finality which no theology on earth can ever possess? (see chapter ii.). Paul himself does not: 'We have this treasure in earthen vessels'; 'Prove all things, hold fast that which is good.' (4) Did God's Holy Spirit, guiding men into all truth, abdicate His office after He had inspired New Testament writers? Or has He been enlightening men from that day to this? Can we say of Paul's statements: This is the last word of Revelation? Or is God making revelations to us even now? In other words, is progressive revelation a myth?

Surely, if we want Paul to be a living power with us to-day, we must hold fast to the spirit and substance of his teaching, but recast its form and letter. We must steep ourselves in his spirit and the spirit of our own age as well, and, above all, test both by the religion and spirit of Christ. So alone will Paul's theology become fresh, real and true, preaching its God-given message to us.

And what is Paul's spirit? The spirit of his Master. At heart this is Paul's message to us: God is Love. Love conquers and redeems the world. Love is the greatest thing in God's universe (1 Cor. xiii.). Say what we will, Paul's gospel is nothing if not 'the

universal gospel of God's grace,' as it has been finely phrased. Grace is its keynote, and Grace and God's Love are one and the same. Next to 'grace,' with Paul, comes 'faith,' and of it Paul says that it is an empty thing and a sham if it be not 'faith that worketh through love.' Listen to Paul himself: 'Love never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. . . . Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three, but the greatest of these is love.'

We do not deny that there is, in Paul, a faint underlying picture of God as our Judge and Lawgiver. It is there. But from first to last, Paul's Portrait of God which stands out in strong relief is Christ's own Portrait of the Father in the story of the Prodigal Son. The God of Paul at his best is the God of Jesus. Therefore our cry should not be: 'Away from Paul back to Christ,' but rather: 'Through Paul back to Christ and to God our Father.' Read Paul in his own true spirit and his message is not merely for one age, but for every age.

Sanctification (see chapter xv. 'Spirit' (B) and chapter xviii. 'Christ's Atoning Death' (B)).

CHAPTER XXI

SONSHIP = FREEDOM FROM THE LAW

S. PAUL tells us that in Christ we are 'adopted sons of God.' At first glance the expression jars on us. In our day, adoption always indicates that the adopted child is not really and truly his new father's child at all. He is only regarded as such by a kind of legal fiction.

Now we naturally consider ourselves real and true children of God, our Father. He always calls us His sons in the Bible, and it is as actual sons of God that Christ appeals to us to live up to our high calling. Therefore, when Paul treats us as adopted sons, we instinctively resent it. 'Adopted sons of God, indeed,' we exclaim, 'we are nothing of the kind!' 'Ye are the sons of God,' says Christ, and we *are* God's real sons, sons who are sadly missed when away from their Father's home. The story of the Prodigal Son plainly tells us that we are sons for whom our Father's heart yearns with a love that cannot rest till it has sought us out, bad as we are, and found us again, and lovingly welcomed us back to our Father's warm embrace.

There is no denying that Paul's picture of our relationship to God is not nearly so attractive and does not speak to our heart with anything like the same

warmth or appealing force as Christ's. True, Paul in introducing the subject (Gal. iii.) apologises for the inadequate way in which he expresses himself. 'I speak after the manner of men,' *i.e.* I am only using a human analogy, a word-picture borrowed from the Law courts, so as to make my meaning plainer. You must not press it too far. What I really mean is something far deeper and warmer than the words imply. Paul has certainly filled the legal term 'adoption' full of a rich meaning and turned Roman clay into Christian gold. None the less, the true instinct of Christian feeling has refused to give currency to Paul's new-coined phrase 'adopted sons,' and retained Christ's far truer and warmer term 'sons.'

Paul's idea of 'adoption' is borrowed from Roman Law, and there we must turn for our definition of the term.

In Roman Law a father had absolute control over his children (*patria potestas*). They were his absolute property to keep or dispose of at his good pleasure, just as if they were 'chattels.' If the father wished to sell his son as a slave, or hand him over to another family, this had to be done in open court by a legal act closely akin to the legal transference of lands, houses, slaves, or cattle by act of sale. The son, in legal phraseology, had to be 'conveyed' to his new owner.

In adoption proper, both the natural and the adoptive father must be present in court in person, together with witnesses, one of whom carried a pair of scales. The adoptive father, laying a hand on the son, said: 'I claim this man, bought with this money, as my

own.' On this, he struck the scales with a bronze coin, which he handed over to the seller as a token of the price paid.

If the son's natural father was dead, he could still enter another family as the adopted son of another man. The same formalities were gone through. The new father claimed him as his own, and if there were no opposing claim the magistrate made over the son to the claimant.

From that moment the adopted son became the actual son of his new father, just as if he had been born in true wedlock. The original relationship between the natural father and the son was completely cancelled. The adopted son now ranked as a full and direct heir of his adoptive father as if by right of birth. Should the father die while the son was still of unripe years, he was placed in wardship, under a guardian or 'tutor.'

This dry extract from Roman Law may help to make Paul's expression 'adopted sons' plainer, when we come to deal with it by and by, but there is some ground to cover yet before we come to it.

In Gal. iii. we are told by Paul on what grounds and under what conditions we are adopted by God as His sons and heirs. It is a very difficult and intricate passage.

Paul tells us God entered into a solemn covenant or compact with Abraham of a most binding nature. This compact has all the force of a will or testament disposing of an inheritance. This will the testator cannot rescind, for he has irrevocably pledged himself to it. But as it is entirely an act of grace on God's part, Paul usually calls it a 'promise to Abraham and his seed.'

By its terms, God assigns His inheritance to Abraham and his seed on one condition. As soon as this condition is fulfilled, Abraham and his seed are entitled to enter at once into their inheritance of the Kingdom of God, with all the privileges and advantages accruing thereto.

The one condition imposed is implicit faith in God. No one, however, succeeds in fulfilling this condition perfectly except Christ. So true is this that Paul insists it was Christ God had in view when He made the promise to Abraham and 'to his seed.' The word 'seed' is in the singular, says Paul. Therefore it clearly points not to 'many,' but to 'one,' *i.e.* Christ (Gal. iii. 16).

Paul next shows that the promise was not, as the Jews try to make out, made to themselves as a nation. True, they are the 'seed' of Abraham in so far as they are his descendants according to the flesh. But, by the terms of the covenant, the inheritance of the Kingdom of God was tied down, not to Abraham's physical, but to his spiritual children, *i.e.* to all and any who are believers like him, whether sprung from his loins or not. By the very wording of the promise, only 'they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.' In legal language, the inheritance is 'entailed.' It is restricted to a particular class of heirs. In this instance, it is tied down to a particular person, and to such other heirs as can establish a claim in and through him. Christ is this person. It is only with Him that the will (διαθήκη) comes into force and is put into 'execution,' for He alone fulfils its conditions and so brings the will into effect.

But the will is both retrospective and prospective. In His own Person, Christ enables all believers born before or after Him to establish their claim to a share of His inheritance and to be joint-heirs with Him. For Christ, the Man from Heaven, is the Archetype, the Head of all believers, and includes them all in Himself. As soon as a man is 'of faith,' he is in Christ. But Christ is *the* Son of God, His sole rightful Son and heir. Therefore, since Christ and believers are one, the believer also becomes 'son of God,' heir to the Kingdom of God, joint-heir with Christ.

What constitutes a believer? Faith. We need not here go all over the ground we have so often covered (see chapter xix.). In faith we cast ourselves unreservedly upon the grace and bounty of God. Conscious that we are sinners we plead 'Guilty,' resting our hopes —not on our own merits, we have none, but—on the mercy and Love of God.

As sinners, how do we stand before God? Christ answers, prodigals as you are, you are still the beloved sons of God. Not so Paul. He sets the matter in a much more lurid light. According to him, we are prisoners at the bar of God's court of justice. By our sins we have snapped the bond that linked us with God, we are strangers to Him, and have no claims on Him whatever, except His anger. We are not even our own property. We have sold ourselves as slaves under Sin, and the Law is our jailor to see we do not escape. Sin and the Law, these are now our rightful owner and taskmaster, unless some one can come forward, prove that he has a stronger and prior claim on us, pay our purchase-money and secure our release.

It is just here that Paul's theory of legal adoption, borrowed from Roman Law, comes in, though the analogy is not complete.

God, in His Love, comes forward and claims us as His sons. He pays our purchase-money in full. The Death of His Son on the Cross is the price with which we are bought back. Sin and the Law, our master and jailor for the time being, can now raise no opposing claim. They know we were God's own before we came under their power, and the purchase-money satisfies in full any 'lien' they may have on us. Therefore the Judge in open court declares us 'adopted sons' of God, with all the rights and privileges accruing to our sonship, and makes us over to Him.

Now we can see at a glance that this is Justification all over again put in another form. At the moment of our justification, God pronounced verdict of full acquittal upon us sinners. Why? Because His Son, Jesus Christ, bought us at the price of His own Blood, stood in our stead at the bar of God's justice, took all our guilt upon Himself and gave us His own righteousness in exchange.

As a matter of fact, justification and sonship go hand in hand and cannot be parted. Justification is the act of God, sonship its result. In justification God acquits us of all guilt and takes us into a new relationship with Himself by the divine act of 'adoption' (*υἱοθεσία*). We are now the objects, no longer of His anger, but of His perfect Love. This Love also fills our own hearts and casts out all fear. Henceforth, God is Abba, our Father, and we are His loving sons rendering Him devoted filial obedience.

Immediately on our adoption, three things follow in its train: (1) we are freed from all bondage of the Law; (2) we are endowed with the Spirit of God whereby we cry Abba, Father; (3) as sons of God we are now heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, though we shall not fully enter into our inheritance of the Kingdom till our resurrection. But we already have a foretaste of it here and now.

The certainty that we are sons of God now, and shall be fully so hereafter, is guaranteed to us by the Spirit of God given us by God at the time of our sonship. The two, the sonship and the Spirit, so essentially and invariably go together that the presence of the Spirit is the one criterion and test of our being really sons.[1] 'For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they (and no others) are the sons of God' (Rom. viii. 14). 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God' (16).[2]

Freedom from the Law

By our sonship we are entirely freed from the Law. We are expressly told so in Gal. iv. 5. 'God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the

[1] Our sonship, which depends on our union with Christ through faith, is the condition of our receiving the Spirit of the Son. We must not reverse this order. It is *not* receiving the Spirit of the Son that makes us sons. It is our union with Christ, and this, in its turn, depends on Faith. The order of sequence is: (1) Faith; (2) Union with Christ; (3) Sonship; (4) Spirit of the Son. All hangs on a self-surrender of the whole heart to God, or Faith. Then we are 'in Christ.'

[2] This may contain some allusion to the witnesses necessary to the solemn act of adoption in Roman Law courts.

Law, to redeem them that were under the Law (*i.e.* to buy us out and release us from its bondage), that we might receive the adoption of sons.'

We have already spoken on the Law at some length (chapter v.), but the discussion of it in Galatians is so important that we must find a place for it.

In Paul's eyes, the Law was meant by God to be in force only for a season, *i.e.* during the period between Moses and Christ. Its object was twofold: (*a*) educational; (*b*) to convict men of their guilt.

At times, even Paul admits that the Law is 'holy and just and good.' But even then it holds an inferior place. It did not come direct from God Himself, 'It was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.' So Rabbinic Paul[1] makes out, in opposition to Exodus, thus making the Law inferior in dignity to Abraham's promise given directly by God (Gal. iii. 19). Still it is the revelation of the Will of God, and tells us what acts are pleasing or displeasing in His eyes. Thus it educates the moral sense. This is no slight stage in the evolution of the soul, and Paul admits it. But he very charily concedes any moral value to the Law. Keeping the Law is good in a way, but it is an inferior way of doing the Will of God. It is school-boy obedience, artificial and compulsory, obeying orders because you must or it will be the worse for you. Thus it is only meant by God for a primitive stage of the spiritual life, and only for a season. Hence Paul likens men under the Law to sons under age who are

[1] The Rabbis had such a sublimely transcendent idea of God (*cf.* Priestly Code) that they made 'angels' intervene in God's communications with man.

kept within bounds by their 'schoolmaster' or 'tutor' under irksome restraint (Gal. iv. 2).[1]

As a rule, Paul denies the Law even this qualified moral and educational value. It still has a good purpose, only it is the exact opposite of what the Jews fancy. It is not there to make us good—this is utterly beyond its power—but only to make us see how bad we are. Far from delivering us from our sins, it only makes us sin all the more. This is not only its effect, but its real aim. Its divine purpose is to make us despair of ourselves altogether, and force us to rest our sole hope of righteousness on God's gracious goodness.

From this point of view Paul looks upon the Law as our taskmaster and jailor. It issues orders to us in the Name of God which we cannot possibly carry out. The weakness of our nature compels us to break them. Then the Law pounces upon us as wilful transgressors of God's orders, and binds us hand and foot as self-convicted prisoners, conscious that we have justly incurred God's wrath and lie under the curse of His Law which we have deliberately broken. Prisoners at the bar of God's justice, we stand speechless in the presence of the Law our jailor and accuser. It bears witness against us that we have wilfully sinned in disobeying the orders it gave us in God's Name, that we knew all along that the wages of such disobedience is death. Deaf to all appeals for mercy, death is the verdict it claims as its right.

[1] Paul could not entirely deny that men had lived good lives under the Law. David, the prophets, psalmists and many others abundantly attested the fact. His quarrel is not with these, but with the Pharisaic conception of the Law current in his day, the outcome of the Priestly Code.

Thus the Law not only awakens the bad conscience to a sense of its guilt, but calls down its curse upon us and makes our doom, death, stare us in the face. Paul's words are none too strong : 'The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the Law.' None but a despairing conscience knows what this means, but it knows it only too well. It is the awful knowledge that we have flown in the face of God's express Will, that He is against us and will have nothing to do with us, except in anger and judgment. Condemnation (*κατάκριμα*) ; 'curse' (*κατάρα*) ; 'death' (physical—and spiritual ?—*θάνατος*), these are the only things to which we can look forward.

Paul's estimate of the Law is depreciatory in the extreme. He can only see its 'weak and beggarly elements.' At best it is only a rudimentary sort of spiritual guide, if even that.[1] Its one aim is not to save men, just the reverse. It is there merely to keep close guard over them as a jailor, so that they shall not be able to escape from God's wrath and its own curse in any other way than by the door of faith.[2]

[1] Lightfoot and others will have it that Paul will not even concede this much. They say that 'schoolmaster leading us to Christ' is a mistranslation, and *εἰς Χριστόν* really means 'till Christ came.' If so, the Law as our schoolmaster means the same thing as the Law as our jailor. The tutor's only object is to keep his young charge or ward as closely as if he were in prison, to make him aware of his faults so that he may feel very small. This is possible, for Paul is fighting the Law as *Pharisees* viewed it, and wants to prove it is absolutely worthless for righteousness. It is only a *negative*, and in no way a *positive*, preparation for the gospel of Christ. It is precisely because the Law is such a broken reed that men have to turn to Christ as their one hope.

[2] Among the arguments brought forward by Paul to show the Law's worthlessness for salvation, we may mention: (1) The works of the Law are useless, for the promise to Abraham was purely an act of grace on God's

How does Christ free us from the Law? In this way. The Law is God's Law, and even Christ cannot ignore it. It is 'holy, just and good'; the expression of God's Will. It has been wilfully transgressed by man. Its verdict of condemnation, its curse, its doom of death are just and right. They are awful realities, and God cannot pass them by, and yet be a holy and just God. Rom. iii. 25-26 makes this very clear. 'God set forth His Son to be a propitiation through faith in His Blood, *to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past*, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just.' God seemed, as Acts xvii. 30 says, to have 'winked at' past sins. His leniency, hitherto, cast a shadow upon His righteousness. It might be questioned whether God was really so particular or concerned about the difference between right and wrong. At the Cross, God showed conclusively that He was inexorable to sin, that His Law was an inviolable Law, and that the Law's claim that condemnation of death should be passed upon man was a right claim.

God sent His own Son to take man's sin upon Him, to bear the curse and condemnation that was man's due, because man was in a helpless and hopeless plight.

part and depended on no good works on man's part. (2) God bound Himself by an oath to keep the promise in its original form. (3) The Law came in 430 years later, and in no wise as a new condition to the promise. (4) If the inheritance depended at all on keeping the Law, then it would be the wages of good service, a debt due to man by God, and not a pure gift on His part. (5) Therefore the Law is not a new door to the inheritance; on the contrary, it is a jailor keeping us under lock and key to bar our escape from prison and death.

Nothing sinful man could do could mend the situation. It must all be done for him by a substitute so representative and so sinless that all the claims of God's broken Law are fully met. God's own Son, the Man from Heaven, our Head and Archetype, alone satisfies all these demands. It is upon man, made under the Law, that God's Law has a claim. Christ must therefore become a man, made under the Law. Death, the curse of the Law, is the penalty man has to pay. God recognises the justice of the verdict, and Christ dies in our stead. There and then, He takes our sin, our curse, our condemnation, our Death upon Himself. Now we are free; free from sin, free from the curse of the Law, free from condemnation, free from death.

As believers, we are one with Christ. Therefore we are full sons now, no longer prisoners, or even wards, under the Law our tutor and jailor. We are no longer children under age, we are full sons and heirs. The Christian has nothing more to do with the Law in any shape or form.[1] He has learnt by sad experience, like Paul, that there is neither life nor any good whatever

[1] Paul enforces this by allegorical arguments valid in his day, not so now: (1) The driving out of Hagar and Ishmael in favour of Sarah and Isaac means the abrogation of the Law in favour of gospel freedom. We, freeborn like Isaac, are freed from the bondage of the Law and no longer slaves like Ishmael, the son of the bondwoman. (2) The death of the husband dissolves the marriage-bond, so does the Death of Christ dissolve our covenant with the Law. Our marriage-bond with the Law is at an end now that we have died with Christ, and we can now marry a new Lord. (3) The veil on Moses' face indicates that his Law was only for a season. The evanescent brightness on Moses' face shows forth the evanescent force of his Law. He veiled the fact, but Christ has removed that veil, and we now clearly see that the Law was only a temporary makeshift.

to be found that way, and he is done with the Law for ever. 'I through law died to law that I might live to God' (Gal. ii. 19, R.V.). 'I am crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I that live, but Christ that liveth in me.'

True, the Christian is now 'without the Law,' but he does not live a lawless life. He is now a law unto himself, and this new Law within himself is far more exacting, demands a loyalty to the Will of God far more searching than under the old Law.[1] It means to walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit of Christ, and this is essentially a spirit of self-sacrificing Love. 'For all the Law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself' (Gal. v. 14).

This is the only spirit of the Christian life. It never can be reduced to the form of a statutory code of commandments, a catalogue of 'Thou shalts,' or 'Thou shalt nots,' a set of definite prescribed rules. This Law is written, 'not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.' It works from within, not from without as the old Law of Moses, and, since it is the Spirit of Christ, it never makes a mistake.

Thus the Christian's aim, his chief end in life, says Paul, is still righteousness as of old. It is only the old Pharisaic means of achieving it that are renounced and replaced by the one true principle of Christ working in us.

One word more. Our new sonship carries with it

[1] To make quite clear the perfection of the obedience required of 'sons,' S. Paul, in Rom. vi. 16 *sqq.*, employs, with an apology for doing so (19), the term 'slavery' to describe it, though he soon throws it aside (viii. 15) in developing his idea of the son's life in Christ.

another corollary. *All* believers without exception are now one in Christ, and therefore sons and heirs. Gentiles are sons equally with Jews. Jews are freed from their bondage to the Mosaic Law (Gal. iv. 3-5); Gentiles are freed from their service of bondage to gods that are no gods (iv. 8-9). Therefore both alike are now free in Christ, no longer slaves to any bondage, but free sons. Hence 'there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Jesus Christ' (Gal. iii. 28).

CHAPTER XXII

PREDESTINATION AND ELECTION

PAUL invariably writes first and foremost from a practical point of view. He bases all he has to say on personal knowledge and experience, and subordinates everything to action and the purpose he has to serve. In other words, he is a Jew, and purely speculative considerations have little or no interest for him.

His sweeping assertions in the matter of 'election' are a reply to Jews who try to make out that their good works in keeping the Law give them a claim on God on the score of merit. Paul flatly retorts that God is bound by nothing in man. The only thing which in any way binds God is loyalty to His own character. Things are what they are because God is what He is. Everything in the world is working for the best in spite of all appearances to the contrary.

We must bear in mind that Paul is a Jew and, therefore, not a slave to logic—often he is absolutely illogical. It is so here. In his dogmatic statement about predestination, he has not fully thought out, systematised his subject in all its bearings; he often overlooks for the moment its application to man as a moral being, and frequently lands himself in con-

tradictions. He tells us in the same breath that the rejection or election of Israel is: (1) purely a matter of God's own absolute choice and man has no voice in the matter at all, and also that (2) Israel's rejection is due entirely to the Jews' own fault.

As a matter of fact, Paul here finds himself face to face with a problem which is humanly insoluble. No man can think seriously on the subject for five minutes without reaching a point where 'the wings of the soul beat vainly against a wall of steel.' Predestination is an eternal truth of reason and of revelation: free-will is an eternal truth of revelation and every-day experience. To a higher reason than ours the two probably are complementary truths, though to us they seem mutually exclusive and contradictory. Deep down in our hearts we feel that 'there's a divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them how we will,' and at the same time we have a moral conviction that we are free agents. How this is or can be we cannot say, yet we know it must be so. 'Ah, truly,' says Reuss, 'if the last word of Christian revelation is contained in the image of the potter and the clay, it is a bitter derision of all the deep needs and legitimate desires of a soul aspiring towards its God. This would be at once a satire of reason upon herself, and the suicide of revelation.' God's ways would then not only be 'past finding out,' but the ways of a God who was a mere capricious despot.

Paul undoubtedly is a predestinarian, though of a qualified kind. But his word about 'the potter and the clay' is not the last word nor the only word on the subject in the Bible, or even in his own writings.

The fact is that Paul is writing under considerable limitations. He is the first New Testament writer to broach the subject. He is a genius, but, like all pioneers of thought in any great movement, he hits on a hypothesis which covers most of the facts and lies very near the true solution, but he converts it too soon into an established law. He does not see it quite in its right perspective, and subjects it to a strain which it cannot bear.

Once more. All along one feels that Paul has adopted an extreme view, proves too much, because he wants to give a crushing reply to his opponents and uphold the gospel he preaches against a very serious objection. Both Jews and Gentiles will naturally say to Paul: If your gospel is true, then God has broken His Word with His chosen people. He pledged Himself by a solemn covenant to the election of Israel, and now you say that He has rejected Israel. This is impossible, and next door to blasphemy. Paul retorts: This is not impossible. Besides, I do not say that. He makes out his case, but, in the course of it, he is frequently driven to desperate straits and all but at bay.

Paul's views on predestination are strongly coloured by: (*a*) his conception of God; (*b*) his own personal experience; (*c*) his reading of history; (*d*) Rabbinical theology; (*e*) his own theology.

(a) *Paul's conception of God.* In Paul's eyes, God is both immanent and transcendent. Here he strongly emphasises God's transcendency. 'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His

ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him and it shall be recompensed to Him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things; to Whom be glory for ever. Amen' (Rom. xi. 33-36). No man ever had a more intense or exalted idea of God than Paul. God is over all, and through all, and in all. He worketh all things according to the counsel of His own Will. He is the author and upholder of everything, the all-powerful moral Controller of all that He has made. Everything that comes to pass in history is the pure outcome of His good pleasure. God is the potter, and all the world, man included, things on earth and things in heaven, everything is the clay which He moulds as He wills to His own good ends.

(b) *Paul's own experience.* Another important key to Paul's attitude is to be found in Gal. i. 15. There, as Lightfoot tells us, he heaps up word upon word to show us how clearly he realises that, from the day of his birth, he himself has been as wax in God's hands. Even when he was thoroughly unconscious of it, God had all along been fashioning him for his Apostleship to the Gentiles, preparing him even from his mother's womb for the after-work God destined for him. 'When it *pleased* God, who had *separated* me from my mother's womb, and *called* me by his *grace*.' God moulded him to His own purposes whether Paul liked it or not, and in spite of all his opposition. It was of no earthly use his kicking against the goads. He only hurt himself, and had to walk the road to which God's goads kept him all the same.

Paul is certain that his is no singular experience. God deals in the same way with all mankind. Man is moving along the road God has mapped out for him. Humanity is kicking furiously against the goads, but in the end it must reach God's appointed goal.

(c) *Israel's history.* In his crushing retort to Jewish arrogance, Paul points out to them that they have no more right to a privileged claim to God's favour than any other race. It is purely a matter of God's free and unlimited choice. 'For He saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and compassion on whom I will have compassion . . . and whom He will He hardeneth' (Rom. ix. 15, 18). The Old Testament proves it. Abraham was chosen of God's free choice. Abraham had several children; only one, Isaac, was chosen of God. It was the same with Isaac's two sons. Jacob, irrespective of any merits of his own and though he was the younger of the two, was 'elected' by God even before he was born, while Esau was rejected, also apart from any question of personal merit, for he was not yet born at the time of his 'rejection.' 'Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated' (Rom. ix. 13). And as Paul casts his eye over Israel's history, he sees the same thing happening over and over again. It is only a 'remnant' in Israel, a chosen few in the large mass of the nation, who are 'elected,' while the rest are 'rejected.'

We naturally exclaim: this does away with all man's responsibility. Paul silently admits it, for Rom. ix. 19-21 openly declares that man is what he is, morally and religiously, because God wills it; he must not complain if he is bad. 'Nay but, O man, who art thou that

repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast Thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour?' [But, immediately, Paul qualifies this harsh statement. He gives a gleam of hope. He asks a question which implies a large and glorious answer. He asks: What possible ground can God have for making men 'vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction'? He replies: These vessels of wrath are there as object-lessons to show God's hatred of sin, to display both His holiness and His power. More than this, the evil they do is made by God to minister to the edification of His children, so that it actually works for good. He does not drive home this thought to its logical conclusion in Rom. ix. (where his main idea is to establish in full force the analogy of the potter and the clay), but in chapter xi. he makes it perfectly clear. He shows us in Rom. xi. that the hardening of the 'vessels of wrath' is but for a season, and God's universal favour will extend even to them. The Love of God is far wider than His anger. The apparent dualism of a hating (Rom. ix. 13) God who hardens and a loving God who has compassion resolves itself at last into a higher unity of a God of Love (xi. 7 *sqq.*)].

(d) *Rabbinical theology.* Paul was a Pharisee of the Pharisees, and all Pharisees were more or less fatalists. Josephus tells us that they made everything dependent on fate and God. Fate enters into every action, though man has a very limited power of free choice. The Psalms of Solomon bear this out: 'Verily, as for man, his portion is laid in the balance before Thee, he addeth

not thereto nor increaseth contrary to Thy judgment, O God' (v. 6). The Apocalypses of this period assure us that all the experiences of God's people are known to Him, and nothing comes to pass without His consent. They all happen because God wills they should. Certainty of blessedness for the righteous is not dependent upon their own piety, but upon God's having foreordained it (Assumption of Moses, xii. 8). The age (*αἰὼν οὗτος*) is fixed (Book of Jubilees) and will come to an end when its measured course is run (2 Esd. iv. 39; vii.). A certain number of righteous must be gathered in first. It is near its end, possibly in living men's lifetime.

(e) *Paul's own theology.* Paul's whole scheme of salvation presupposes 'election' and brings it out into the strongest relief. We have seen that, from beginning to end, Paul insists that our righteousness is the pure gift of God. Every single step we take in our Christian life is due to the 'grace' of God. It is through grace that the call comes to a man to open his heart to God, and through grace the man is made willing to respond to the call. It is the grace of God again that creates faith, and grace that justifies, and so on to the end.

All this is pure 'election.' The believers who are called are chosen simply because God wills that they should be chosen. 'We know that all things work for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to the will of God (*κατὰ πρόθεσιν*). For whom He did *foreknow*, He also did *predestinate* to be conformed to the image of His Son, . . . Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also *called*: and whom He called, them He also *justified*: and whom He

justified, them He also *glorified.*' *Foreknew*, *predestinated*, *called*, *justified*, *glorified*, here we have the five links in the Divine chain which hang together in such a way that, as soon as the first comes in the rest are bound to follow as a matter of course. God does it all and man's share is next to *nil.* An attempt has been made to qualify the hardness of this absolute predestination by giving God's foreknowledge a modified meaning. It has been suggested that God foresees who is going to be morally good or bad and that this is all His foreknowledge or predestination means. One would like to adopt this view, but it is not Paul's. 'He hath mercy on whom He will have mercy (ὃν θέλει), and whom He will He hardeneth' (Rom. ix. 18).

We can thus see that Paul firmly believed in predestination and election. It was all but thrust upon him by his early associations, his history, his personal Christian experience. He could not help his creed. Fortunately, his conception of God made him see in predestination the 'foreknowledge' and 'election' of a God *Who is our Father.* Therefore he sees in the whole history of the Universe, and of mankind in particular, Love as the source and Love as the goal. Even the hardening of 'vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction' is only for a season and has a good purpose. Instead of contradicting God's Love, it is a brilliant proof of that Love.

Paul seems to have endorsed Isaiah's creed: 'I am the Lord, and there is none else. There is no God beside Me. . . . I form the light and create the darkness: I make peace *and create evil.* I the Lord do all

these things.' Even evil has its place in God's economy, for the perfection of saints requires trial and temptation. If we are to grow in moral strength, we cannot possibly do without them. Even Christ had to be made perfect in this way. God makes evil minister to good, and this is one reason why there are vessels of wrath (Rom. ix. 22-23).

But there is much more than this. God's hardening of the wicked is only for a season, and the rejected are not passed over for ever. It is only a provisional rejection, and their turn will come. He proves this by the case of Israel. Why, he asks, why is it that the majority of the Jews are rejected of God? Why is it that only a 'remnant' of Israel have been chosen of God, while the rest are spiritually blind and have not obeyed the call of the gospel of Christ? Because God has hardened their hearts and blinded their eyes and dulled their ears (Rom. xi. 8). Then, 'hath God cast away His people? Have they stumbled that they should utterly fall? God forbid!' Then what is the reason of the hardening? It is part of God's plan. The unbelief of the Jews is there merely to provoke, to stimulate the Gentiles to make the salvation, which the Jews reject, their own (xi. 11). Does this mean that God's chosen nation is sacrificed so that alien Gentiles may be saved? For the time being, yes, but not for ever. As soon as the full number of the Gentiles shall have entered into the kingdom of God, the whole of Israel will again be brought into favour, 'and so all Israel shall be saved' (xi. 25 *sqq.*). Just as the rejection of Israel had 'provoked the Gentiles to jealousy,' so the election of the Gentiles will 'provoke the Jews to emulation' in its turn.

Paul has at last reached a point where God's 'election' is robbed of all its capricious favouritism, and we see clearly into God's divine plan. In His eyes, all individuals and nations are once more very much alike, and He is not the respecter of persons Paul tried to make us at first believe. They are, after all, all members of one body, and none can dispense with the other. The health of the whole body depends upon the health of each and every part. But though the whole body is one, each member has its special function for which it is naturally adapted. Some of these members may seem to be more honourable and to have higher functions than others, yet each nation in turn is God's 'steward.' Israel first, the Gentiles next, have been entrusted with God's salvation for the common good of all, and with each advancing stage in this spiritual evolution we are drawing nearer and nearer to the 'divine event to which the whole creation moves.' If the rejection of the Jews meant the salvation of the Gentiles, then the return of the Jews into God's fold must mean the salvation of the whole world (xi. 12, 15). 'For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon *all*.' Well may the Apostle exclaim, as he contemplates this universality of salvation as the culmination of God's eternal plan, 'O the depth of the riches of the knowledge and wisdom of God!'

From the heavenly height Paul has reached in this magnificent chapter (Rom. xi.) he clearly sees another fact which our holden eyes still refuse to recognise. Evil forms part of God's economy. If God includes all under sin so that He may reveal His favour to all,

then sin is not only permitted, it forms part of God's scheme of salvation. This is a bold paradox, but we can grasp its truth if we think deeply and clearly.

In Rom. ix.-xi. Paul deals thus fully with the doctrine of predestination. He articulates with great precision, and in their natural sequence, the five links in the chain—foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification, glorification. This classical passage does not stand by itself. It is corroborated not only by *e.g.* Eph. i., but, in the main, by the whole scriptural teaching concerning the divine scheme of salvation. Paul builds thereon a consistent and magnificent philosophy of history.

Two of his premises we must accept: (1) God is all-wise, all-good, all-powerful. (2) Because God is what He is, He must have an eternal plan and be able to effect what He purposes. Therefore He will.

But can we follow Paul blindly and say that there is no room in God's system for the self-determining power in the human will? Is man as mere clay in the hand of the potter? Again, we may and must grant that the 'divine event to which the whole creation moves' will be exactly in accordance with God's original and eternal design, *but* have we any right to assume with Paul that, at any moment before the end, all things are exactly as God would have them to be? Once more, is he right in his assertion that the five links of the chain, beginning with the foreknowledge and ending with the glorification of the believer, are so indissolubly joined together by God that once a man is chosen for salvation, he cannot possibly fail to attain it?

If God is omnipotent and man a dummy, Paul's scheme is logically unassailable. In actual practice his theory fails to cover the facts of life, or else self-consciousness is a myth and we are self-deluded every moment of the day.

Paul himself in actual practice constantly contradicts his own creed. We could multiply examples, but the following may suffice :—

(1) Rom. ix. 1-30 tells us in language which teaches unqualified predestination that Israel had no voice whatever in its own election, but was as clay in the hand of the potter.

Yet Rom. ix. 30–x. 21 throws all the blame of Israel's rejection on Israel itself! How can the vessel be responsible for what the potter makes it? Compare the warning to the Gentiles (xi. 21) that, if they act as Israel did, they will share its rejected state (*cf.* esp. Rom. i. 28).

(2) If God's foreknowledge and election necessarily carries with it eternal salvation, and no human power from within or from without can prevent this result, then what are we to make of 1 Cor. ix. 27? 'I keep my body under and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.'

(3) Rom. ix. 15-16. 'I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy . . . so then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy,' is pure predestination.

Yet when Paul comes to deal with the facts of our Christian life, he bids us will right things, he bids us run well in the race, he bids us work out our own

salvation with fear and trembling. He even tells us that God will reward every man according to his works (Rom. ii. 6 *sqq.*; 2 Cor. v. 10).

His Epistles are full of appeals recognising the moral nature and responsibilities of man, while the whole of his indictment against human sin entirely loses its point if his predestination doctrine holds good.

(4) 2 Thess. i. 8-9 tells us that the bad will be punished with everlasting destruction. Rom. viii. 19-23; xi. 30-36 speaks of a universal restoration and salvation, *cf.* 'As in Adam *all* die, even so in Christ shall *all* be made alive.' 'Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.' 'God concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon *all*.'

Therefore, on Paul's own showing and example, in spite of his doctrine of predestination, the Church has a message of hope and not of despair for the world. 'Come unto Me . . . and whosoever cometh, I will in no wise cast him out.' It is a gospel of the redemption of all, the gospel of God our Saviour: 'Who will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth' (1 Tim. ii. 3-4).

CHAPTER XXIII

THE CHURCH

In a deeply interesting paper on the 'Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen,' Dr. Burkitt writes: 'Jesus went to His Death believing that by so doing He was bringing in the Kingdom of God. As a matter of history, it brought into being the Christian Church. And to those who believe that, notwithstanding all shortcomings and imperfections, the Church is really animated by the Divine Spirit, the result justifies His expectations.'

This suggests two important questions: (*a*) How far did Paul identify the Kingdom and the Church? (*b*) How far are the two really identical?

The Kingdom and the Church

Neither with Christ nor with Paul do the Kingdom and the Church stand so far apart as people generally think, yet the two are by no means identical in either. With both, the Kingdom of God is a far wider conception than the Church, which is only a part of it. With both again, there is something ideal, heavenly, other-worldly in the Kingdom, which sets it on a far higher plane than the Church. In the Kingdom we feel that the scene is on this earth yet not of it, not of

time but of eternity, while in the Church we are always conscious of being bounded by our lower horizon. The Church has to be idealised,[1] endowed with a perfection strangely at variance with the vulgar reality of the Church as we know it, before we can in any way identify it with the Kingdom of God.

The word 'Church' was probably never used by our Lord. It only occurs thrice in the Gospels, and *in every instance in 'S. Matthew.'* This suggests a strong suspicion that it is 'S. Matthew' himself who places it on our Lord's lips. The unknown author of our first gospel certainly wrote after 70 A.D., when the Church was fully organised, and he wrote with a pronounced ecclesiastical bias. He adapts both his language and narrative to the ecclesiastical needs of his day. 'It is essentially a Church Gospel,' says Harnack, 'compiled for the use of the Church.' S. Matthew even attributes to Christ the late baptismal formula in the Name of the Trinity!

But whether Christ ever used the word 'Church' or not, He certainly had a Christian Church in view, only He calls it by another name—the Kingdom of God. The parable of the mustard seed (Mark, Matt., Luke) clearly identifies the Kingdom with the whole company

[1] Let us define 'idealised.' We look at a friend's portrait—his is an ordinary face as we know it, yet we see it now lit up with a strange beauty. At once we recognise the likeness and say: 'It is he, only idealised.' No! it is the man himself, only the artist has eyes to see what we see not. To us, the face is a mask; he has had a vision of the soul breaking through the outer covering. He has seized the expression at the moment of the man's inspiration by some soul-stirring thought, aglow with some deep emotion, lit up by the fire that comes from the individual's inmost self. This is the man's true self; the ordinary face is only his mask. *Thus the ideal is the only real.*

of God's faithful servants here on earth, *i.e.* His visible Church.

'The Kingdom is like unto a grain of mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds, but groweth up and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches, so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.'

At the start, the only members of the visible Church were Christ, its Founder, and the Twelve. This is the 'small seed.' This small band soon grows to 120, 500, 3000. The seed is now a tree. Gradually, the Gospel spreads to all nations. Gentile converts find peace and protection in its fold. 'The tree has shot forth great branches, and the fowls of the air (=Gentiles) lodge under the shadow of it.'

Of course, Christ means much more than this by the Kingdom of God. It stands: (1) for the love of God in a man's heart, *e.g.* parables of 'Pearl of great price,' 'Hidden treasure,' 'Leaven'; still more (2) for the perfect Kingdom in the future, which the 'Day of the Lord,' will inaugurate, *e.g.* parables of 'Ten Virgins,' 'Talents,' 'Sheep and Goats,' 'Tares.'

Christ not only had a Christian Church in view, a Kingdom of God on earth, He made every provision for it. He calls the Twelve as its shepherds, ordains them, takes immense pains with their training, for He knows that on them He has to depend for the nucleus of His Church and its spread. Even in His own lifetime, He sends them out as missionaries. He instituted Baptism as the rite of admission into His Church, and the Eucharist as its visible bond of union with Him and with each other. Before He left this

earth, Christ had provided everything necessary for the existence, development, permanence, and unity of His Church. He had also guaranteed His abiding Presence in it in His Messianic Spirit.

So it is that although Christ probably never spoke of the Church but only of the Kingdom of God, while Paul seldom speaks of the Kingdom but always of the Church, Paul and Christ mean very much the same thing. Paul is investing the Church with the glories of the Kingdom when he calls it 'a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but holy and without blemish' (Eph. v. 27). It is 'the holy Temple of God' (1 Cor. iii. 17) and 'it shall judge the world' (1 Cor. vi. 2), while its members are 'the saints' (*οἱ ἅγιοι*).

Paul does not, of course, confound the Church with the Kingdom any more than does his Master. He has far too exalted an idea of the Kingdom to do anything of the kind. No New Testament writer has caught more truly than Paul the innermost and distinctive meaning of the Kingdom. 'The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost' (Rom. xiv. 17). Yet he knew perfectly well—none better—that the visible 'Church of God' was split into two rival camps over this very question of 'meat and drink.' He knew that only by a large stretch of the imagination could actual Christians be called full of 'righteousness, peace and joy.' Again, 'the Kingdom of God is not in word, but in power' (1 Cor. iv. 20); yet Paul knew quite well that this very Corinthian Church prided itself on its 'wordiness,' and valued no gift in comparison with the

gift of tongues, while there was very little of the 'power' of Christ's Spirit in a Church which was factious, immoral, puffed up, and unspiritual even to the extent of over-eating and drinking at the Lord's Table.

None the less, Paul calls these imperfect Christians 'saints,' 'sanctified in the Lord Jesus.' And he was quite right for two reasons: (1) He is, to begin with, an unqualified predestinarian. He knows that once a man is 'foreknown' of God, he is already 'predestinated,' 'called,' 'justified,' nay, 'glorified' (Rom. viii. 29-30). Therefore these Corinthians who were once 'fornicators, adulterers, idolaters, effeminate, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners, for such were some of you' (1 Cor. vi. 9-11) are now 'elect' and on the high-road to 'glorification.' He already has a vision of them as 'sons of God,' angels, in spite of their shortcomings. Beneath the rust and grime that hides it, he sees their true self with the image of Christ, into which they are going to grow, clearly stamped on it. (2) This is one reason, and here is another. We may call it 'idealising' if we will, but it is precisely because Christ and Paul believed in and appealed to the highest and best in man, the likeness of God which is in every man, that they inspired their fellows with enthusiasm and faith, and were constantly gladdened by a wondrous response. In the worst of sinners, says Christ, the outward man that meets the eye is not the real man, only his lower self. Release the true self that lies hidden beneath and you come to the real man. '*When he came to himself*' was ever Jesus' reading of publicans and sinners. He was full

of faith in man, treated them as actual sons of God, and they gladly responded. S. Mary Magdalene, once the byword of society, has in her the passion of a saint; weak Peter is the Rock on which Christ means to build His Church. Therefore, 'be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect' is Christ's word to men. 'Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?' is Paul's.

We are thus prepared for a very exalted conception of the Church in Paul's Epistles, in the bright light of his ideal of it, though he is never blind to the vulgar reality.

The Church of God is the whole society of believers, the collective company of 'all that call in every place upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.' It is the *Body of Christ* of which He is the Head. It is animated by His Spirit. By virtue of their vital union with Christ, all the members of His Body are one with Him and with each other. His Holy Spirit flows in all the veins of this Body, even as the sap in every branch, twig and leaf of a tree. Thus Christ is the source of the life of His Church, the cause of its growth, the centre of its unity.

As the abode of the Holy Spirit, its shrine, the Church is the *Temple of God*, the Holy of Holies (*νάος*).

Paul also personifies the Church and calls it '*the Bride of Christ*' (2 Cor. xi. 2). This idea is closely allied to the idea of the Church as the Body of Christ. The Church is Christ's Bride, because the two are one Body, even as man and wife are one body and one flesh.

Unity of the Church

If there was one task more than another on which Paul set his heart, it was that of welding Jew and Gentile into one. He hated divisions in the Christian Church with a holy hatred. In his eyes, it was like tearing Christ Himself into pieces. 'Is Christ divided?' he asks (1 Cor. i. 13). 'Ye are the Body of Christ, and members in particular, for the body is not one member but many . . . yet all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ.'

So long as the Church, before the martyrdom of Stephen, was confined practically within the walls of Jerusalem, it naturally was felt that all believers were one united family. Even when the Christians were scattered all over Palestine, in consequence of the persecution which followed Stephen's death, the whole body of believers is still summed up in that single word, the Church, not the churches (Acts ix. 31 R.V.).

But Paul's own preaching altered all this. He established local churches all over the Roman Empire. Twenty years or so after Christ's Death, all Southern Europe was studded with them. Thus we read of the Church 'at Antioch,' in Corinth,' '*of* the Thessalonians,' even 'the Church that is in the house of Aquila and Priscilla.'

Now the chief practical anxiety of Paul's life was to bring these scattered churches, which had sprung up under his preaching, into a living unity with the Mother-Church of Palestine, and *vice versa*, so as to weld all believers into a single organic whole, the undivided and indivisible Church of God on earth. It

was no mere Gentile Church that he had in mind to found, but the one Church of God embracing all Christ's followers everywhere. Christians were all members of the one Body of Christ, one family with its centre in Jerusalem and with its members in all parts of the world. It was the danger of a breach with the Mother-Church that caused him so much anxiety at the time of the Council of Jerusalem. It was to cement closer the bond between the Gentile and the Jewish Church that he laid so much stress on the great collection of money for the poor saints of Jerusalem, and placed it before his churches as a sacred duty.

One way of establishing this unity would have been to regard the Jerusalem Church as the Head Church (*cf.* Rome later), with the Twelve as a kind of Apostolical college, and to have entrusted to it the control of the whole Church of Christ. In Acts, the Church of Jerusalem very nearly assumes this position. As a matter of fact, it never did, neither would Paul or his churches have tolerated such a claim for one moment. Out of respect, the Mother-Church might be looked up to and even consulted, but the other churches stood in no sort of relation to the Church of Jerusalem which bound them to listen to its orders and obey them. The unity which bound all the churches together was purely ideal. They were linked together by a common faith, a common hope, a common purpose, but otherwise they were free and not obliged to bow to the government and decrees of the Mother-Church or any other.

It speaks well for the love and earnestness of these early Christians that this freedom did not lead to the

sacrifice of unity, but the danger of its doing so was always there, and Paul realised the fact. All the more imperative was it on him to impress upon his converts the oneness of the Church of Christ all the world over, and their duty as Christians to regard all other Christians as members of the same family as themselves, and to act accordingly. This sense of unity he fosters by every means in his power. He reminds them that the Church is one because Christ is one. The Church and Christ, to Paul, are 'not two but one, for they are one flesh' (Eph. v. 31). 'There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all.' Not only are ye brethren, ye are members of One Body, animated by the Spirit of Christ, *i.e.* the Spirit of loving service and self-sacrifice for others. Therefore Love is the bond which links the members of the Church to Christ and to each other. The tie which links you together is closer even than that of brothers, for ye are bound together as intimately as the various limbs of the human body. One believer can no more dispense with the love and service of another, or refuse to serve and love him, than the eye can dispense with the ear, or the head with the feet or hands. Therefore, if one believer suffers, all suffer with him; if he rejoices, they all rejoice.

This is one of Paul's most inspired and inspiring thoughts, and of immense practical value, for it makes the performance of our duty to our neighbour the most natural and reasonable thing in the world. If my neighbour is myself all over again, then in serving him

I am doing myself good, in deceiving him I am deceiving myself and so doing myself infinite harm. Therefore, says Paul, 'We owe no man anything but to love one another,' or again, 'Speak every man truth to his neighbour, for we are members one of another.'[1]

Paul goes even further. So strongly is he convinced of the truth of his words: 'If one member of the Body (of Christ) suffer, all the members suffer with it,' that he drives the truth home to its utmost logical conclusion. The whole Body suffers, but the Body is Christ's Body of which He is the Head, therefore our virtues and shortcomings affect not us men only but Christ Himself. We are His 'fulness.' It is in us alone that He can achieve His self-expression. *Without us He cannot be made perfect.* Our imperfections are His imperfections, our virtues His virtues. Not till His Body, the Church, is 'without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing' will His fulness be complete.

Here again Paul hits intuitively on a truth which we call a modern discovery, and his message appeals to the reason and conscience of every one of us, for it is in harmony with our highest idea of the eternal order of God's Universe.

Public Worship of the Church

We have seen that all Christians looked upon themselves as one family, the household of God, bound together by one faith, one hope, one purpose. Needless to say, members of this Christian brotherhood

[1] Mr. Lecky says that the command to speak the truth to one's neighbour has no natural sanction. We prefer Paul's view that it has, and our modern idea of man's 'solidarity' endorses it.

will seize every opportunity of joining together for the worship of God and His Christ, also for ministering to each other's bodily and spiritual needs and comforts.

This is exactly what we find the early Christian Church doing. 'They continued daily in the teaching of the Apostles and the fellowship,[1] and in the breaking of bread and the prayers' (Acts ii. 42-46). 'And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul; neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common' (Acts iv. 32).

In their divine worship, the Temple and synagogue were not forsaken, but supplemented by other services of a purely Christian character. At first, Christians would probably go to the synagogue on the Sabbath (Saturday), and to their own Christian services on the Sunday. Acts ii. 46, 'Day by day they continued stedfastly with one accord in the Temple, and breaking bread at home,' implies daily worship and celebration of the Lord's Supper, but S. Paul only speaks of a service on the first day of the week (1 Cor. xvi. 2).

By degrees, Christian worship became more and more separated from synagogue worship, for several reasons: (1) The Jews, after a time, were unable to tolerate Christian tenets, and cast Christians out of their synagogues; (2) Christian Churches, as they developed, naturally adopted more and more a pronouncedly Christian form of worship; (3) Uncircumcised Gentile converts were unacceptable to Jews,

[1] *i.e.* they were of one heart and soul, and looked upon themselves as one family.

while the converts themselves had no leanings to a Jewish synagogue, and preferred a Christian meeting and service of their own.

Thus Christians soon had their private places of meeting. Even in Jerusalem, the service was held in an 'upper room,' while S. Paul constantly refers to the Church in a house (*e.g.* 1 Cor. xvi. 19; Rom. xvi. 5; Col. iv. 15).

At the outset, the Christian service was conducted very much on the lines of the Jewish synagogue, and never departed entirely from it.[1] In Jewish synagogues the service consisted of opening sentences, prayer spoken by one of the congregation, lessons from Scripture also read by different members of the congregation, and the exposition of a passage of Scripture by the reader or some one else. Even when a priest was present, the only part of the service which none but he could perform was the benediction at the end of it. The rest of the service was open to all competent members of the congregation. It is said that even a woman could read part of the lesson, in urgent cases, though many objected to it. The 'ruler' and elders had to see that all was done 'decently and in order.'

Christian services were exactly of the same type. 1 Cor. proves that it was open to any member of the congregation, who was qualified, to offer prayer, give utterance to words of praise, or deliver an address.

[1] This was natural, especially for Palestinian Christians, who looked upon themselves as the true Israel, the chosen people, 'the Israel of God,' as Paul calls the Church, even in writing to Gentiles. They succeeded to the privileges hitherto accorded to the Jewish Commonwealth, and took over its worship and its sacred books, etc.

Even women prayed and preached, though Paul strongly objected to this practice. The idea was that every Christian had received the Holy Ghost and received some 'gift' of the Spirit. Whatever gift a man possessed, it was lent him not 'to profit withal' for his own selfish edification only, but for the general good of the Church. If he had the gift of praying, speaking, or praising 'to the edification of the Church,' it was his bounden duty to place it at the service of the congregation.

As in the Jewish synagogue, some one, the elders probably, must have been responsible for seeing that everything was done 'decently and in order,' but otherwise all were on a level, and any part of the service could be performed by any believer whom the Spirit moved. This did not work altogether satisfactorily even in these early days, and means had to be adopted in the Corinthian Church to induce some would-be speakers to be silent.

The service varied, and depended greatly upon the nature of the gifts of those conducting it. Thus S. Paul mentions as parts of a service, a 'psalm,' a 'teaching,' a 'tongue,' a 'revelation,' an 'interpretation.' He asserts that it is advisable not to have more than three 'speaking in tongues' at one service, and better still to omit 'tongues' altogether unless there is an 'interpreter' present to explain what these ecstatic unintelligible utterances mean. He also lays down a general rule that not more than two or three preachers (prophets) are to give addresses. He also adds that if, while one man is speaking, the Spirit suddenly moves his neighbour to speak, the first speaker must sit down.

Generally speaking, the service seems to have consisted of *prayer*, *praise* and *teaching*. There was, of course, no set form of prayer. The object and contents of the praise would vary with the occasion and the speaker. Praise was offered either by one individual or in hymns, psalms and spiritual songs sung by the whole congregation. Teaching and preaching were highly valued. The preaching of inspired 'prophets' took the form of exhortation, and Paul held 'prophecy' in very high esteem as an edifying and converting power (1 Cor. xiv. 24). The Scripture was of course read publicly in the service, though S. Paul does not directly refer to it. He wishes his own letters to be read publicly (in Church) (1 Thess. v. 27; Col. iv. 16), but for edification only, for he had not the least idea that they would ever rank as Scripture.

There seems to have been a lack of method in these services, and, if we are to judge by the Corinthian Church, things were not always done decently and in order, nor to the general edification of the congregation.

It will naturally be asked: Was there no regular ministry of any sort? The answer must be: Yes and No. There were *Apostles*, to begin with, but their authority, though great, was undefined. They were officials neither of a local congregation nor of the Church at large. They were Christ's chosen missionaries, and their mission was to proclaim the message of Christ and convert men. In this way they served the whole Church. Their influence was great and their apostolic character was fully recognised. They advised and even commanded, but even Paul is not at all sure that the Corinthian Church will comply

with his orders. They owed whatever dignity and authority they possessed, not to their official capacity, but to their spiritual character and qualifications.

The *prophets* had a prestige only second to the Apostles themselves. They were not necessarily or even primarily men who predicted the future. They were simply, as the word means, 'mouthpieces' of God, inspired preachers. They received their call to office, not from men by the laying on of hands, but direct from God, without any ordination at all, except that of the Holy Spirit. They were not attached to any special church, but went from place to place preaching Christ with wondrous power.

The next in order after apostles and prophets, in Paul's list, are the *teachers*. These were catechists who carefully and systematically instructed converts in the articles of the Christian Faith, teaching them all the facts concerning God and His Christ essential to a right understanding of Christianity.

Thus apostles and prophets belonged to the whole Church, and did not exercise any local functions as officials, while the teachers acted only as catechists. How then was government and discipline exercised in public worship and in the Church generally? At the outset, no organised system of government existed at all. There was no election to office. Earnest believers, who were spiritually qualified, volunteered their services for any office or good work, not with a desire to rule, but as a purely disinterested labour of love. They 'set themselves (ἔταξαν ἑαυτούς) to minister to the saints.' 'Ye know the house of Stephanas, that they have set themselves to minister

to the saints, submit yourselves unto such, as to every one that helpeth us and laboureth' (1 Cor. xvi. 15-16). As with the Apostles, so with these men, they owed whatever authority they possessed, not to their official capacity, but to their own spiritual character and endowments.

The congregation itself, however, frequently followed the Jewish practice and elected chosen representatives to act on its behalf in looking after the public services, the care of the sick and poor, the collection and distribution of funds, hospitality to travelling brethren, and so forth, giving them certain disciplinary powers. They were like our churchwardens.

But from first to last the congregation acknowledges no rulers. It rules itself. S. Paul's letters to Corinth and Galatia prove it. If there had been recognised ministers or other officers over these churches, Paul would have held them responsible for the disorders in their church. He never does, but leaves the whole matter in the hands of the congregation itself for decision. Clearly there was no fixed organisation in the Pauline churches. The authority of any man in the Church was a purely spiritual authority, and depended upon the recognition of his qualifications by his brethren. The relation of the community to its leaders is one of esteem and respect merely. 'We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake' (1 Thess. v. 12). Evidently they are looked up to, not because of their office, but as a grateful return for volunteering to devote themselves to the service of the saints.

True, in the Pastoral Epistles, we do find something approaching to definite official Church government, but not elsewhere. In Paul's day the congregation ruled itself, though here and there we can already begin to see traces of what will afterwards develop into central control and obedience to official authority, but it is still of a most rudimentary type.

Sacraments

Baptism[1] was the rite by which converts were admitted into the Church. Paul takes it for granted that every single Christian is baptized (1 Cor. xii. 13). He attaches immense importance to the rite from both a mystical and a symbolical point of view, and gives it a peculiarly spiritual significance.

He regards Baptism both (1) as effecting a union with the Death of Christ, and also (2) as a fundamental witness to Christian unity. (1) Total immersion was the rule, and according to Paul we herein rehearse our Lord's Death when we sink into the water, His Burial when we are hidden in it awhile, and His Resurrection when we emerge from it new and clean. In it we die to sin and rise to newness of life (Rom. vi. 3 *sqq.*). In fact 'we put on Christ' (Gal. iii. 27). (2) It is a standing witness to Christian unity, for 'By one Spirit we are all baptized into one Body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, bond or free' (1 Cor. xii. 12); *cf.* Eph.

[1] Baptism, bathing the whole body in pure cold water, was a recognised means of purification from ceremonial uncleanness among the Jews. Gentiles had to be baptized before becoming Jewish proselytes. John's baptism would therefore seem natural to Jews as a symbolical representation of repented-sin cleansing.

iv. 5, 'One baptism.' Converts were baptized 'into Christ Jesus' (Rom. vi. 3), or 'into Christ' (Gal. iii. 27); but there was as yet no fixed form of words, and certainly not the Trinitarian formula, which is of later date. Faith was the one requisite in the recipient, and it was confessed openly either by the baptized himself, or by the baptizer for him, by word of mouth (*ἐν ῥήματι*) (Eph. v. 26). Not a word is said as to who are the proper ministers in baptism, and apparently every Christian could act as such. Paul tells us explicitly he himself did not baptize if he could help it,[1] 'for Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel.' He can only recollect some three instances in which he officiated as minister of this rite (1 Cor. i. 14-17).

Lord's Supper. In 1 Cor. S. Paul gives us his view of the significance of the Eucharist. The classical passage is 1 Cor. xi. 23 *sqq.*, in which he gives us his version of the words of Institution as he himself 'received it of the Lord.' He adds an interpretation of his own, 'For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come' (26), indicating that the celebration of the Lord's Supper is an act which proclaims the Death of the Lord on our behalf.

In 1 Cor. x. 16, 'The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion (*κοινωνία* = fellowship) of the Blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the Body of Christ? For we, being many, are one bread and one body; for we are all

[1] This seems passing strange, if Christ expressly ordered His Apostles to baptize as S. Matt. xxviii. 19 says.

partakers of that one bread'—all the stress is laid on the *vital union* with Christ and each other which the celebration of the Eucharist involves.

Thus Paul sees in the Eucharist both a confession of faith, in so far as it is a commemoration of the Death of our crucified Lord; and also a living bond of union with Christ and all believers through Him.

These passages from S. Paul are specially important, because they are twenty years or so earlier than any others we possess. We shall come back to them presently. We shall understand them better if we first form some idea of the way in which the Lord's Supper was celebrated in Paul's day.

The context clearly shows that the Eucharist formed part of an ordinary meal,[1] exactly as on its first Institution. On the first day of the week there was a gathering of the whole body of the faithful, rich and poor, at a common meal, of which the 'breaking of the bread' and the 'drinking of the cup' formed a part.

[1] No one of the terms used contradicts this, just the reverse: '*Cup of blessing*' is the Jewish expression for the third cup of wine at the Passover feast. Jews always begin a meal with 'blessing' (εὐλογία), and end it with thanksgiving (εὐχαριστία), and both the bread and wine are blessed; hence 'He took the bread and blessed it,' 'He took the cup and gave thanks,' exactly express the ceremonial in ordinary Jewish use at such a meal. '*Cup of the Lord*' is naturally used in 1 Cor. x. 21. The sin of the Corinthians lay in the fact that they failed to distinguish between the one cup of wine, set apart as the Lord's Cup, and the ordinary cups of wine that preceded it. '*Table of the Lord*' also indicates that whenever the Lord's Supper is celebrated on an ordinary table in an ordinary house at an ordinary meal, it is now the Lord's Table. *Communion* (κοινωνία), the ruling idea here is that of fellowship. 'We being many, are one bread, and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread.' '*Lord's Supper*' (1 Cor. xi. 20), the expression points to the occasion and hour of the day of the original Institution.

It was held in the evening, and the meal was of a social nature, each member contributing his share to it apparently. It was a kind of Love Feast. The believers ate together, and when the meal was ended one of them would arise, take the bread and break it and pass the pieces around, and likewise with the Cup, exactly as our Lord had done. Naturally, a man of spiritual qualifications such as an Apostle would be expected to take the lead on such a solemn occasion (Acts xx. 11), but this did not follow as a matter of course.

There was, however, a grave danger of irreverence in the celebration of the Lord's Supper at a social meal of this nature. In Corinth, at any rate, the scene on these solemn occasions not infrequently was more lively than orderly. These Greeks before their conversion had been accustomed to club-feasts (ἔρανοι), organised both for mutual relief and for enjoyment. The Christian Love Feast seemed to them much of the same nature. Richer members came, bringing their sumptuous suppers with them, or monopolising what was meant for all alike, and sat down to eat it without waiting for the others. Each was thinking of himself and his own supper, and the poor and friendless were put to shame. At the end of the meal, when the time came for the more solemn part of it called the 'Lord's Supper,' some were so hungry that they ravenously ate the portion of the sacred loaf given to them, thinking more of its material than spiritual value. Others had drunk so much wine that they could not receive the holy bread and wine with due reverence.

This was an intolerable state of things, and the

Apostle sets himself to reprimand these Corinthians sharply, to lay down some general rules, and to set forth the awfulness of their sin by explaining to them what this holiest of rites really means. He openly tells them that to their awful irreverence is due the large amount of illness, and even death, prevalent amongst them. It is God's judgment upon them. He urges them to 'examine themselves' before they come to the Lord's Supper, and to learn to discern (*διακρίνειν*) the Lord's Body from ordinary food.

To awaken them to a sense of the intense solemnity of the Eucharist, he next proceeds to set before them its full significance, so as to make them see that their treatment of the elements of which Christ says: 'This is My Body . . . this is My Blood,' is as if they did it to Christ Himself. They are slighting the Death of their Redeemer and putting Him to an open shame, dishonouring Him flagrantly.

In giving the words of Institution, Paul alone quotes 'This do in remembrance of Me'; and whereas S. Matthew says: 'This is My Blood of the covenant which for many is shed for the remission of sins'; and S. Mark: 'This is My Blood of the covenant which is shed on behalf of many,'[1] Paul gives Christ's words as simply 'This cup is the new covenant in My Blood.'

These words clearly allude to the Sinai covenant-sacrifice, which was the old covenant with which Christ's 'new covenant in His Blood' is contrasted. On that solemn occasion 'Moses took the blood, and sprinkled

[1] We need not quote S. Luke. Westcott and Hort show that the words after 'This is My Body,' in Luke, have been largely interpolated and harmonised with Paul's version.

it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you' (Exod. xxiv. 6-9).

By means of this Blood of Christ's covenant the Lord's Supper instantly became a sacrificial meal. The Blood of a covenant was not life-blood flowing in the veins of a living victim, but life-blood shed in sacrificial death. Thus the Blood *shed* and the Body *broken* were clearly meant by Christ to point to His Death, and they draw their full meaning from it. Paul is therefore quite right in his interpretation, and every act of celebration of the Holy Eucharist shows forth the Death of our crucified Redeemer till He come again.

It also indicates vital union, on the part of the recipients, with Christ and with each other. With all primitive peoples, eating and drinking together knits those who share in a meal in a common bond. Far more is this the case when the meal is a sacrificial feast. There the food and drink are the meat and blood of the sacred victim offered to the deity, and this involves a binding union between the god and the worshippers. The blood was considered specially efficacious in this connection, for it is the seat of life. This is an idea which is peculiar neither to the religion of Jews nor Christians, but a popular belief deeply rooted in all nations and religions all the world over. Gentile converts would at once understand how intimate and binding was the union established by Christ's blood-covenant between Himself and all who partook of the Eucharist. It carried with it a mystical union with Christ, exactly as, in their olden days, their idol feasts

linked them with demons and brought them under their influence and sway (1 Cor. x. 20-21).

Thus the Lord's Supper, according to Paul, is at one and the same time (1) the feast of the new Messianic Kingdom; (2) a confession of the sacrificial Death of Christ; (3) a vital bond of union with Him and all Christians.

In dealing with the Corinthians, ever practical Paul, as we have seen, first brings home to them the insult they offer to Christ in failing to recognise His Presence and the slight they are putting on His atoning Death. Then he reprimands them for setting at naught the vital bond of loving union with Christ and their fellow-believers which the Eucharist was intended to cement.

It has been truly pointed out by a modern writer[1] that, in a certain sense, Paul was the first to give the Lord's Supper its modern aspect. Before his day it had always formed part of a social meal; he first made it a special and purely religious meal, of a more or less formal and ceremonial nature, in which the eating and drinking are purely symbolic acts. Owing to abuses which had arisen in connection with the Supper as eaten in the ordinary way, he laid down a principle which soon was accepted everywhere. It certainly was conducive to greater reverence, but it drew a line between sacred and secular, and robbed the ordinary meal of its sacred character. This is contrary to the Pauline spirit; but desperate evils need desperate remedies.

[1] McGiffert.

Spiritual Gifts

We said a moment ago that it was contrary to the Pauline spirit to draw a line between sacred and secular. Nowhere is this Pauline trait of recognising God's Presence in the ordinary experiences of life better illustrated than in his estimate of spiritual gifts. Before Paul's day, as in ours now, large departments of life were cut off utterly from God's administration. Early Christians had a vivid sense of the presence of the Holy Spirit in their midst, but they only recognised this Presence when there was some striking, almost miraculous, outpouring of the Spirit—*e.g.* in the gifts of tongues, healing, prophecy, miracles and so forth. Similarly, we ourselves speak of eloquence, poetic genius, musical talent, scientific or philosophic endowments as secular 'gifts,' while we reserve the title of spiritual 'graces' for, *e.g.*, gentleness, patience, truthfulness, faith, etc. We readily and rightly recognise the presence of the Holy Ghost in the 'graces' of the saints; we are slow of heart to believe that He is equally manifest in the other gifts of men. Such a view will hardly square with the Bible. Isaiah knew better. Even of the ploughman and his labour he says: 'His God doth instruct him to discretion and doth teach him' (Isa. xxviii. 26). Paul saw God's Spirit at work in the trivial round, the common task, just as much as in the working of miracles. With him, the Holy Spirit in a man is never dormant or reserved only for big occasions. Paul realises His Presence in the gifts of tongues, but a great deal more in brotherly love.

Indeed, one of the greatest boons which Paul con-

ferred on Christianity was in leading the reaction against the unduly high opinion of purely miraculous 'gifts' current in his day, such as the gift of tongues, which conduced little to the general good. He refused to recognise as true 'gifts' such as did not benefit the whole community and edify the Church, while he raised ordinary moral virtues, such as the love which comforts the sad and helps the weak, to a dignity far and away above 'tongues,' 'miracles' and other so-called 'gifts' which merely filled onlookers with awe and wonder. The Church could get on very well in the absence of the miraculous gifts which, in Corinth at any rate, pandered to vanity, curiosity and unhealthy excitement. But the Church could not get on at all without the more ordinary moral virtues, for they are of abiding value. In Paul's day the more 'showy' gifts had already entered upon a stage of rapid degeneration, and it was mainly through his influence that they fell into disrepute and became extinct. The loss is not so great as it seems, for there was apparently a great deal of the ecstatic about them. It was through Paul's influence also that the comparatively non-miraculous gifts (*e.g.* teaching, preaching, faith, love), morally and practically more important for the life of the Church, came to be included in the number of 'gifts of the Holy Spirit.' They never fail and never can vanish away.

S. Paul gives us a list of these 'spiritual gifts' in 1 Cor. xii. 7 *sqq.*: 'The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge; to another faith; to another the gifts of healing; to another the working of miracles; to another

prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues.'

These we can only briefly define, or rather the chief of them :—

(a) '*The word of knowledge; the word of wisdom.*' That is to say, to one man it is given to teach others the elementary Christian truths, speaking from heart to heart, without any intellectual or philosophical depth; to another is granted deeper insight into the 'mysteries' of God, so that he enters into the inner counsels of God.

(b) *Faith.* Not the 'faith' which every believer must have, but the strong faith which inspires equally strong faith in others, and enables the owner of this gift to, *e.g.*, heal the sick.

(c) *Prophecy.* Inspired preaching of an edifying, comforting and converting character. Like the prophets of old, these inspired men had a 'revelation' from the Lord.

(d) *Discerning of Spirits.* This used to be interpreted as the power of discerning between those who were truly inspired of God and those who merely pretended. The commoner view nowadays is that by 'spirits' Paul really means 'personified spirits.' The belief in possession by demons was shared by Paul. The 'discerner of spirits' could say whether the utterance proceeded from the Holy Spirit or from evil spirits that had entered the speaker.

(e) *Tongues—not* a knowledge of foreign languages, but ecstatic, unintelligible sounds produced by the tongue merely, under the Spirit's influence, without the

understanding having any part in the production of the sounds. 'Tongue-speaking' was such an extraordinary performance that it looked as if the man were supernaturally 'possessed.' The spectators were filled with awe. The Corinthians greatly coveted this conspicuous but unfruitful gift.[1]

(f) *Interpretation of tongues.* The interpreter was able to give the congregation a clear idea of what the 'tongue-speaker' was saying. Sometimes the tongue-speaker was his own interpreter.

[1] They were under the impression that the tongue-speaker was specially inspired, 'god-possessed,' like the 'soothsayers' in all countries, who under the influence of a 'god' worked themselves into a state of frenzy, and gave vent to ecstatic cries. While he was in this ecstatic state, the utterances were not his own. He could neither control nor even understand them. They were 'spirit' words, not human, and had no relation whatever to any intelligible human language. To an unbelieving spectator such speakers would appear out of their mind (*e.g.* at Pentecost they seemed 'drunken, full of new wine'; *cf.* 1 Cor. xiv. 23).

CHAPTER XXIV

PAUL'S ESCHATOLOGY—OR, THE LAST THINGS

WE are too apt to forget that, in Christ's and Paul's pictures of the end of the world, we have truths of undying value framed in the picturesque fanciful language of Jewish apocalypses. These apocalyptic writings sprang up profusely in the two centuries immediately preceding Christ's Advent, and mainly consist of prophetic visions into the future. As their name implies, they lift the veil that hides the future both here and hereafter from human eyes, and reveal all that is going to happen. This they do, not in calm, sober language, but in grand imagery, as if the whole scene were realistically enacted before our very eyes. It is a series of vivid word-pictures, profoundly appealing to the popular imagination.

In reading the apocalypses of Christ (*e.g.* Mark xiii.; Matt. xxiv.), we find ourselves in a whole world of thought with which we should be altogether out of touch were it not that His bold imagery and word-pictures have been so familiar and hallowed to us from childhood. So we take them as they stand in all their literalness—even as His disciples so often did. We picture Christ at His Second Coming appearing visibly in the sky, amid a host of angels and with a loud

trumpet-blast. We think of earthquakes, a darkened sun and moon, stars falling, crashing thunder and lurid lightning. We see Satan and his demons, and all the powers of darkness, crushed in an actual final fight. We even represent Christ as foretelling that all this will come to pass in the lifetime of some of His hearers.

We forget two things. A teacher, if he is wise, always adapts himself to the ideas and language of his pupils, for thus only are they likely to understand what he has to say. For the moment, he places himself on their level, and gradually raises them up to his own. He links his new teaching to the knowledge and beliefs they already cherish and transfigures their old into his new, for there can be no *new* without some *old.*

This is exactly what Christ did. He found all these apocalyptic ideas current as household words, deeply rooted beliefs among the Jews of His day. Like a true Teacher, He availed Himself of this material ready to hand, admirably adapted to His purpose, and used it as a vehicle to convey His new truths.

But there is more than this. It was not all done in a spirit of self-adaptation to His pupils' needs. We must bear in mind that Christ Himself was a pure Jew by birth and education. He largely shared the views of His day. His whole thought and teaching were cast in a Jewish mould. He was in full sympathy with much of the apocalyptic teaching regarding the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth, the coming of Messiah, the Day of judgment and individual resurrection. It was far in advance of anything of the kind in the Old Testament, and only its materialism repelled

Him. So he naturally took up these ideas, and in adopting the language of the apocalypses, turned their clay into gold. He gave a moral, spiritual, world-wide, eternal meaning to an eschatological doctrine which in His day was only, or mainly, interpreted in a material, temporary and local sense.[1]

In reading S. Paul it will help us greatly if we have some clear idea of what these Jewish apocalypses teach, for they are all on one model. From Daniel to the New Testament writers, they all have the same stereotyped symbolic imagery and language in common.

Briefly and roughly, they tell us this :—

(*a*) The present age (*αἰὼν οὗτος*) is a bad age, where the wicked often flourish while the righteous go to the wall. There is another age coming (*αἰὼν ὁ μέλλων, ἐρχόμενος*) when all wrongs shall be set right by Messiah and every man receive according to his deeds. It is very near at hand, and will come suddenly as a thief in the night.

(*b*) The 'Day of the Lord' will be ushered in by dreadful portents, natural and moral catastrophes ; and great tribulation and unparalleled wickedness will precede it.

(*c*) Messiah will appear suddenly, lead God's 'chosen' to victory, crush His enemies and inaugurate His Kingdom. He is variously conceived of either as (1) a supernatural man endowed of God with extraordinary gifts, power and holiness ; (2) the Son of David reserved

[1] It is not too much to say that Christ's picture of the 'Kingdom of God' is the moral foundation on which all that is best in our modern civilisation has been built. Yet consider what it meant to Jews, or even to the first generation of Christians !

in heaven for manifestation in due time; (3) the Man from heaven pre-existent before Creation; (4) divine. He is in full accord with God and His plenary representative on earth. Sometimes He is spoken of as eternal Ruler and Judge. The Spirit of the Lord is upon Him in all its fulness, and He pours it abundantly upon all His faithful chosen.

(*d*) The Kingdom is also variously described. Its happiness is either (1) material, (2) spiritual, (3) material + spiritual. Its duration is (1) for a season only, (2) eternal. It is to be (1) on earth as it is; (2) on a transfigured earth; (3) in heaven.

(*e*) We always hear of a resurrection and judgment in connection with the Kingdom. Sometimes they come (1) at the beginning, (2) the end, (3) both. We may roughly generalise and say that, when the Kingdom is for a season only, there are two resurrections and two judgments—a partial one at the beginning, and a final and great one at the end of it. When the Kingdom is spoken of as eternal, the Great Resurrection and Judgment come at the beginning. But this statement is open to qualifications.

(*f*) In the later apocalypses (first century B.C.) the resurrection is all but unanimously a resurrection of the righteous only, though sometimes all Israelites are included. As a rule, the wicked and all Gentiles[1] are either annihilated at Messiah's coming or have gone at death straight to Hades (= Hell). But there are some allusions to a resurrection of all mankind.

(*g*) It is a resurrection of (1) the body; (2) the soul

[1] In the previous century—*e.g.* Ethiopic Enoch—the Gentiles are to be converted and worship God.

or spirit; (3) the body transformed into a glorified light-like body even as that of angels.

(*h*) Some apocalypses make the blessed dead enter into life (1) immediately after death, but, as a rule, (2) only after the final judgment. Meanwhile the dead are in Sheol, which is now divided into several compartments, with places of pain for the wicked, and of blessedness for the righteous. Some writers, however, still regard Sheol as a shadowy, featureless waiting-place, where the departed live a kind of sleepy existence. It is the half-way abode of the dead, an intermediate state.

(*i*) The final judgment rewards or punishes according to deeds done in the body. The Judge is God; very seldom is He Messiah, though the latter acts in that capacity (sometimes together with His saints) in the partial judgment at the beginning of the millennium. In some apocalypses the final judgment includes all rational beings, human and angelic.

This is the apocalyptic literature Christ and His Apostles found ready to hand, and they made a rich use of it. Christ winnowed its chaff from the wheat, and filled its ideas full of a new and eternal significance. But His disciples did not always catch His real meaning, for He continued to use its figurative and imaginative phraseology, and, dull of understanding, they often took Him too literally (*e.g.* Matt. xv. 16; xvi. 11; Mark ix. 32; Luke ix. 45; xxiv. 11, 25; John xii. 16).

From our short analysis we can easily see how important yet how unsystematic it all is. It marks a vast advance on the Old Testament as regards the resurrection and judgment teaching, and clearly shows a keen

sense of the importance of this life on which so much hangs. But the various writers are still groping their way, and their irreconcilable statements about the future prove that they are by no means at one and definite in their teaching. There is a hesitating tone about it all.

The same remark holds good of Paul's eschatology. Often it is all but impossible to frame a logically coherent idea of his views, and inconsistencies abound.

This is partly due to the fact that Paul was a Jew, and above all things practical. The purely speculative side of his eschatology interests him little. He only approaches the subject incidentally, as occasion demands, with an eye to his converts' needs, not to pry into the future curiously.

At the same time, Paul could not deal, even incidentally, with any subject without focussing his whole thought on it. As the years go by his light grows clearer, his opinions more mature and definite. We can trace a clear development in his eschatology from the crude, popular, traditional views of Thessalonians to the far more spiritual and quite modern teaching of 2 Corinthians, Philippians and Colossians.

With Paul's conception of the Christian 'spirit,' this development in his view of life after death was bound to come. According to Paul's creed, a new factor—the Christ-Spirit—has entered into the personality of every man who is 'in Christ.' Before he became a Christian the flesh was the man's true self. Now it is the 'spirit,' and henceforth the flesh is doomed, and for this reason. Spirit and life always go hand in hand, while flesh means death. Therefore life-giving spirit and death-

dealing flesh are foes, and cannot long dwell together in the same man. One or the other must eventually go to the wall. In the Christian, the 'spirit' of Christ is immeasurably stronger than the flesh. Therefore, sooner or later, the flesh must go and only the spirit remain (2 Cor. v.). Our redemption from the flesh is a process at work even now. This process culminates at the moment of death, when we entirely cast aside the flesh-body and put on the spirit-body which is awaiting us in heaven. Death is thus the glad moment of freedom. It will seize and hold our body of flesh, but death and the grave have no more power over the Christian's spirit than over Christ's. Our spirit *is* Christ's, and, as in His case, will burst the bonds of death and the grave. Our resurrection is assured. It is only a question of time, and immediately after death we are with Christ (Phil. i. 23).

With such convictions, Paul was bound sooner or later to advance far beyond the traditional eschatology. Little by little he pressed home his own principles to their logical conclusions and silently dropped many of the beliefs with which he started. In 2 Cor. v. he clearly enunciates the purely spiritual resurrection we have just described, but the Jew and Pharisee in Paul was too strong to the end to allow him entirely to cut himself adrift from the traditional creed of his race. Hence his strange inconsistencies even in the same Epistle. He hangs incongruous pictures side by side without any clear perception that they clash. In other words, he is a Jew. What is passing strange is that Paul the Jew went so far, while so many of us to-day have gone back to the material bodily resurrection

he all but succeeded in discarding altogether. Paul is far more modern than we are, while we out-Jew Paul the Jew on his most Jewish side and ignore his true revelation. This is not private opinion. The statement of Paul's own views in § C (2 Cor. v.) on p. 327 *sqq.* fully bears it all out.

We may roughly divide Paul's eschatology into four stages :—

A. *First Stage. 1 and 2 Thessalonians.*

In this first stage we have the traditional Jewish apocalypse in all its naked rigidity and materialism.

Second Coming.[1] This is to be a return of Christ to earth in visible form, a real objective event. 'For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God ; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up with them together in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air' (1 Thess. iv. 15-17). 'The Lord shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, . . . and they shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord' (2 Thess. i. 7-10).

Apostasy. Man of Sin. Here Paul brings in another traditional apocalyptic idea. In all apocalypses, ever since Daniel led the way with his 'Abomination of Desolation standing in the holy place,' Messiah's Coming is always preceded by an epoch of unparalleled wickedness. So it is here. 'The Day of the Lord . . . shall not come, except

[1] 'Coming' (*παρουσία*); 'revelation' (*ἀποκάλυψις*); 'Day of the Lord,' are names he calls it by.

there come a falling away first and that *Man of Sin*[1] be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God or is worshipped; so that he as God, sitteth in the temple of God showing himself that he is God . . . Now ye know him who restraineth (ὁ κατέχων)[2] his being revealed . . . (and will go on restraining) till he (the restrainer) is taken out of the way. Then shall that Lawless one be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of His mouth,' etc. (2 Thess. ii. 2 *sqq.*).

Resurrection and Judgment. Paul had told the Thessalonians (1 Thess. v. 2) that Christ was to come suddenly as a thief in the night and in their own lifetime (*cf.* iv. 15-17). Now some Thessalonian Christians had already died. Paul was therefore asked whether they should be deprived of their share in the Kingdom of God at the Coming of Christ. In 1 Thess. iv. 13 *sq.*, he assures his converts that they need 'not sorrow concerning them which are asleep, for the dead in Christ shall rise first, and we which are alive shall not anticipate them which are asleep.' (There is some lack of clearness in this chapter, for we are told in one verse (13) 'them which are asleep in Jesus will God *bring with Him*,' yet three verses later (16) they *seem* to rise when He comes.) As soon as the dead Christians have risen, both the living and the newly-risen are caught up together in the air to meet the Lord (17) and so 'shall we be ever with the Lord.'

[1] = Antichrist, coloured largely by the identification (*cf.* in Dan. = Antiochus Epiphanes) of Antichrist with a historical person. Here prob. = a false Jewish Messiah.

[2] = Roman Empire, held by Paul in high esteem.

We are not told in Thessalonians anything about the resurrection-body, whether Christians will be caught up in their actual bodies, or in bodies suddenly changed. Neither is anything said here about a reign of Christ on earth. As in the apocalypses of Baruch, 2 Esd. and others, the saints at once enter into the glory of the Lord in heaven.

It is a resurrection only of the righteous, in Thessalonians. This, again, is the usual apocalyptic rule, for the apocalypses seldom speak of any resurrection but that of the righteous, or, at the outside, they only include all *Israel.* The Gentiles and, usually, even wicked Israelites are annihilated or relegated to the Hell part of Sheol. At this period Paul shares this intolerant view. 'Everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord' is the doom of all non-Christians. Rom. xi. 32, 'for God hath concluded them all in unbelief, *that he might have mercy upon all*' does not yet enter into Paul's perspective.

We are not surprised to find that Paul's lurid picture of the end of the world, as well as the unauthorised words (2 Thess. ii. 2) of others who echoed his sentiments, produced a fanatical excitement which he has to tone down in 2 Thessalonians.

B. *Second Stage. 1 Corinthians xv.*[1]

[1] This (1 Cor. xv.) is the earliest and most authoritative account we have of the Resurrection appearances. It was the vision of the Risen Christ that converted Paul, and the belief in Christ as Messiah depended, according to Paul, upon His Resurrection. Therefore he would take good care to know *all* that could be said in its support, especially as the resurrection of Christians was questioned by some at Corinth (1 Cor. xv. 12). Therefore he adduces every possible argument, and we thus have a moral guarantee of the completeness of his list of appearances of Christ. Yet we hear nothing of the visit of the women to the Tomb, of the empty Tomb,

This important and suggestive chapter deserves a whole book to itself. We can only give it a few pages.

(a) *Second Coming.* This is still as realistic and objective as ever. 'We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed' (51-52).

(b) *Resurrection.* Immediately on Christ's coming there will be a resurrection of the dead.

Is it a resurrection of all? Or of the righteous only? On this moot point it is rash to dogmatise. Opinions are about evenly divided. It all hangs on our interpretation of the well-known passage: 'As in Adam *all* die, even so in Christ shall *all* be made alive.' Does this mean: (1) Just as *all* men are under sentence of death because of Adam's sin, even so *all* men are heirs of eternal life because of what Christ has done for them? This is certainly the plain and natural meaning of the passage. It is also exactly in keeping with Rom. v. There we are told that the universality of sin is more than swallowed up by the universality of Grace. 'Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound,' etc. (Rom. v. 20).

the vision of angels, the appearances to women, nor of the fact that Christ ate food or allowed Himself to be touched. If he had known of Jesus' eating and being touched, this would so exactly have coincided with his old view, as a Jew, of the bodily resurrection, that he never could have elaborated any other. He certainly did not suppress these facts as inconsistent with his own teaching that flesh and blood cannot inherit the of God. It was not a man of flesh and blood that appeared to Paul —even Acts says no one saw Him but himself—it was a spirit, yet he places his vision of Christ on the same level as that to the others. 'Last of all he was seen of me.'

This seems self-evident. But the evidence on the other side is very strong. They interpret 1 Cor. xv. 22 in this way: (2) Just as all who share Adam's flesh die, so all who share Christ's Spirit are made alive—*i.e.* only Christians are made alive. The Greek words admit of this rendering. More than this, startling as it sounds, this interpretation is far more in keeping with Paul's creed than the other. We have already seen that, according to him, there cannot be a resurrection of the wicked. It is only the life-giving Spirit in Christ and Christians that bursts the bonds of death and the grave and quickens the dead to life. Now non-Christians have not this spirit, therefore they cannot rise. This is the only conclusion admissible, if Paul is to be strictly self-consistent.

But, thank God, Paul often throws logic to the winds. Rom v. and xi. show that logic pulled him one way and his heart another. So here. In 'as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive,' we cannot take 'all' in two different senses, making it mean 'all without distinction' in the first clause, and 'all Christians, but not all men' in the other. Paul here undoubtedly seems to suggest a universality of redemption.[1]

(c) *Resurrection-body.* In Thessalonians Paul had been silent as to the nature of the resurrection-body. Here he enters into the question simply because Corinthian Greeks (*cf.* at Athens, Acts xvii. 32) were puzzled as to how a material body could rise again. On this score, some denied the resurrection of Christians

[1] We are well aware that Rom. ii. 5-12 contradicts this universality, and reverts to the Jewish idea of 'judgment according to works.' But these antinomies are endless in Paul's eschatology. See Appendix.

altogether. A material body in heaven naturally seemed to them a contradiction in terms.

In 1 Cor. xv. Paul faces this problem. Jewish apocalypses offered three solutions, a resurrection of (1) the body, (2) the spirit only, (3) a transfigured body. Paul accepts the last. According to this view, the body was supposed to be changed from one of flesh and blood to a spiritual, incorruptible and immortal body, *in such a way that all the particles of the old body were used up in the transubstantiation of the fleshly body into the spiritual one, so that there was not a trace left of the corruptible body of flesh and blood which had been laid in the grave.* In support of this view, Paul illustrates it by the analogy of a seed developing into a plant or flower. Just as the soul or germ-cell of the seed, call it what you will, sets free and seizes hold of the matter in the decomposing seed around it, and out of this old matter forms for itself a glorious new body, so it is with us. In death we cast off our material and corruptible shell and out of it form a new spiritual and incorruptible body. When we remember that 'spirit' to a Jew was itself a thin kind of luminous *matter*, we can readily understand that this new matter might easily seem to them to be merely a transformation of the old, still the same in a way.

(d) *Millennium.* Is there any trace of a millennium, a reign of Christ on earth after His Coming, in 1 Cor. xv? This is a very moot point.

1 Cor. xv. 23 *sqq.* gives us the series of events from the resurrection to the end of all things, and in their successive order. 'Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His Coming; Then cometh

the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. . . . And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.'

The whole point at issue hangs on this: Is there any interval of time between the resurrection of Christians in verse 23, and the end of all things when God is all in all in the following verses? A formidable array of scholars answers, No! The two follow immediately, the one upon the other.

But, surely, the plain sense of the passage, read without prepossession, suggests four great and distinct stages: (*a*) Christ's Resurrection in, say, 30 A.D. (*b*) The Resurrection of Christians a long time after, at the Second Coming. (*c*) A period when Christ reigns and subdues all God's enemies. (*d*) The last stage when Christ resigns the Kingdom to God and God is all in all.

The third stage, (*c*) cannot represent a moment of time only. The very tenses of the verbs used, and also the words, 'He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet,' suggest a period covering a considerable time.[1]

(2) *Christ's subjection to God.* 'Then cometh the end when the Son shall Himself be subject unto Him

[1] Of course, the retort is easy: 'He shall slay them by the spirit of His mouth' (2 Thess. ii. 8); in the twinkling of an eye, but 'He must reign till He hath put' etc., then becomes absolutely meaningless and reduces Christ's reign to no reign at all, unless it has been going on *before* the Parousia. There is one difference between Paul's view of the reign and that of the apocalypses which is puzzling. They make it a reign of peace, a Golden Age. He makes it a reign of war.

that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.' To us this seems a startling statement, and inconsistent with the rest of Paul's theology, as well as with our doctrine of the Trinity and Christ's essential oneness with God. But it is apparently only Paul's way of suggesting the deep truth that as God and Christ (His Word) were and are one from all eternity, so they resolve again into one at the end. The world begins in a unity and ends in a unity. Still, the plain words distinctly seem to subordinate Christ to God, just as Phil. ii. 6 may mean, not that Christ is God's equal, but that He knows He is not, and does not grasp at an equality which is not His (*see* Pfleiderer's *Paulinism*, i. 147).

Judgment. Paul speaks little of it in 1 Cor. In iv. 4, Christ is the Judge at His Coming. In vi. 3, the 'saints' are the judges even of angels.

C. *Third Stage. 2 Corinthians; Romans.*

Here again Paul opens out a number of deeply interesting and suggestive questions, but our space limits us to two or three.

(a) *The intermediate state.* So long as Paul, and Christians generally, expected our Lord's Second Coming to take place in their own lifetime, there was little or no occasion to enter into details as to the state of the dead who died in the Lord before His Return. They were sure to rise when He appeared (1 Thess. iv.), and the interval was so short that it was not a matter of vital consequence. But as time went on, year after year, and Apostles and other brethren 'fell asleep,' it began to dawn even upon the first generation of Christians that Christ tarried and might not return in their own lifetime, or for some considerable time yet.

Then the subject of the intermediate state began to assume a quite different aspect, and questions began freely to be asked as to the how and the where of this intermediate state between death and the resurrection at Christ's Coming.

This continued tarrying of our Lord made Paul reflect more than before on the actual state of the dead. He begins to realise that he himself will be dead before the Lord's Return. At the time of writing 2 Corinthians he is practically certain of it.

Hitherto, he had spoken of the dead as 'asleep'—*i.e.* he shared the traditional Jewish view that they were in Sheol. This was a place supposed to be somewhere in the bowels of the earth, a large underground resting-place, where the departed lived a dim, shadowy, featureless existence, a sort of half-sleep.

In 2 Cor. v. Paul faces and answers this problem of the state of the dead. He tells us that at the moment of death we enter at once into full communion with Christ. Instantly we are clothed upon with our heavenly spirit-body. We have not to wait for it till the resurrection day, as he once thought and taught. 'For we know that if the earthly house of our bodily frame be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens. For verily in this (fleshly body) we groan, longing to be clothed upon with our habitation which is in heaven.' Compare Phil. i. 23: 'I am in a strait between the two (*i.e.* whether to choose to live or to die), having the desire to *depart and be with Christ*, which is far better.'

These two passages clearly prove that Paul has

now come to the definite conclusion that there is no intermediate state at all. The soul of the Christian does not remain naked, bodiless, for one single moment; neither is it housed for one instant in Sheol's dreary, sleepy, shadowy waiting-place till the resurrection at the Lord's Coming. He has also given up the idea that the spirit-body we shall wear in heaven is made out of the old body of flesh at all. His creed now is this: (1) The resurrection is instantaneous at the moment of death;[1] (2) We pass straight into heaven, 'to depart is to be with Christ, which is far better'; (3) our spirit-body is awaiting us there.

At last Paul has reached the logical conclusion which was implicit in his teaching all along. From first to last he has told us that the Spirit of Christ is ours here and now, placing us in mystical union with Christ, and guaranteeing our full union with Him hereafter. It is only our body of the flesh that hampers us and prevents this full communion now. It is purely the fault of the flesh that 'we are absent from the Lord' (2 Cor. v. 6), for there is no other bar between us and Him. At the moment of death we cast off this body of flesh and instantly the hindrance to our perfection vanishes. At once we are with Christ and the heavenly spirit-body is ours. Like

[1] Did Paul also see that this necessarily carries with it Christ's Resurrection *from the Cross and not from the Tomb*? How the tradition of '*the third day*' arose, we cannot tell. The Jewish belief was that the soul lingered for three days only near the body it had left. Did Jesus ever use the words about the third day? If He did, may He not have used them as a conventional expression for a very short interval? (*cf.* Luke xiii. 32; Mark xiv. 58; xv. 29).

Christ, 'we are declared to be sons of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.'

(b) *The Judgment.* (2 Cor. v. 10) 'We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad' (*cf.* Rom. ii. and xiv.).

We moderns endorse these words of Paul, but, all the same, they come strangely from his lips. The idea of a 'judgment according to works' (*i.e.* personal deserts) is entirely at variance with Paul's whole doctrine of 'grace' and 'predestination.' He tells us in Rom. viii. 29 *sqq.* that God's foreknowledge of His 'saints' involves their predestination, calling, justification and glorification, and the personal equation does not come in at all. How is this to be reconciled with the teaching in 2 Corinthians and Romans about 'judgment according to works'?

Again, on Paul's own showing, the best of Christians are morally defective. If 'judgment according to works' is in store for them as for others, then they must necessarily look forward to it in fear and not in the confident assurance of eternal blessedness. Yet, according to Paul's creed, the Christ-spirit in them, as well as their predestination, guarantees this blessedness assuredly.

Here again we are face to face with one of those antinomies which we so constantly meet with in Paul. He knows he is predestined to glory, yet he is afraid of being a castaway (1 Cor. ix. 27). He knows personal merit reckons for nothing in our salvation, it is all

of 'grace,' yet here he makes God's judgment-verdict depend on it, just as he tells his converts elsewhere: 'work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.'

Critics have tried to reconcile Paul with himself by making him say: All Christians will be saved, but they will reap hereafter just the harvest they have sown here (Gal vi. 7-8). We are what we make ourselves, and we shall begin over there just as we leave off here. This sounds plausible and very modern, but is it Pauline, and does this solution get rid of the un-Pauline doctrine of personal merit? It looks, rather, like a remnant of Paul's traditional Jewish views of 'judgment according to works' which he retains without assimilating it to the rest of his teaching.

(c) *Universality of Christ's Kingdom.* Between Thessalonians and Romans Paul has passed through a great crisis of thought. In Thessalonians he was pessimistic. He looked forward to the 'Man of sin' and an era of unparalleled wickedness before Christ could come. In Rom. xi. he is a decided optimist. All is going on for the best in this world, for Paul now sees 'the far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves,' nothing less than the wholesale conversion of Gentiles as a prelude to the conversion of all Israel. *Then* Christ will come. 'God hath concluded them all in unbelief, *that He might have mercy upon all.*' The universality of men's salvation is God's eternal plan. What a huge advance on Thessalonians! We shall see that in the next and last stage he has something still better in store for us.

D. *Fourth Stage. Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians.*

In these three Epistles we have the natural and full development of Paul's Christology. There is no more subordination of Christ to God as in 1 Cor. xv.; 'For in Christ dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily' (Col. ii. 9; *cf.* Phil. ii. 6 *sqq.*).

But the point which most nearly concerns us here is the supreme cosmic significance ascribed to Christ (cf. *supra*, ch. ix. § 4). Christ is the source, centre, and goal of the Universe. 'For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created *by* (διὰ) Him and *for* (εἰς) Him, and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist (συνέστηκε)' (Col. i. 16-17). Thus Christ is the Creator of the Universe, in Him alone does it find its unity, and it is the eternal purpose of God to sum up all things in Christ (ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι τὰ πάντα ἐν τῷ χριστῷ) (Eph. i. 10). In fact Christ is now what God alone was in 1 Cor. xv. 'all in all' (Col. iii. 11; *cf.* Eph. i. 23 and Phil. ii. 10). The Kingdom is now 'the Kingdom *of Christ and of God*' (Eph. v. 5). Christ's Kingdom thus lasts for ever, and He does not resign it 'at the end' to the Father.

Now these plain statements involve most far-reaching issues. If all things in heaven and earth, human beings and spiritual beings as well, if 'all things both which are in heaven and in earth are to be gathered together in Him,' if nothing whatsoever is to be excluded from Christ's Kingdom, what then? If we look at the question without prepossession, all this obviously points to the universal salvation of men and spirits, good

and bad, without a single exception. Not one thing or person—not the world of nature itself (Rom. viii. 19-23)—is excluded from the benefits of the Cross (Col. i. 20) or the Universal acknowledgment of Christ as Saviour and Lord (Phil. ii. 10). Christ's complete victory does not leave room for Satan to have one adherent left, or even for Satan himself to remain unreconciled to Christ.

Nothing short of this will make God and His Christ 'all in all' in the Kingdom. One single thing or person, rational or irrational, human or angelic, good or bad, left out would limit the completeness of the glorious final result. For the expressions used do not mean that God and Christ merely rule *over* all, whether Their subjects like it or not. Paul's picture represents all the subjects of the Kingdom gladly and loyally doing obeisance to their King, of their own free will and accord. King and subjects alike form one large united Family, they are members of one Body, working together harmoniously in peace, unison and mutual goodwill (*cf.* Eph. iv. 16).

The only loophole of escape from this logical conclusion is to suppose that the final consummation has been brought about by the annihilation of all wicked persons and unbelievers. But this is a very questionable—and to us unthinkable—way out of the difficulty. We have seen Paul's ideas following a clear line of continuous development. All along Paul set his face towards the direction in which that line travelled, resolved to reach the goal of Truth to which it led. He began with the Jewish intolerance of the Thessalonians. In 1 Cor. xv. he took a huge stride forward and sees that

'as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.' Romans xi. goes further still, and assures us that what we call evil is often an angel of God in disguise sent to meet us on our way for our good. He had all but broken his heart over the unbelief of his beloved fellow-countrymen, the Jews ; and he now sees it is all part of God's eternal plan. 'God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all.' Their rejection has led to the admission of the Gentiles ; this in its turn will lead to the conversion of all Israel, and thus the whole human race will be saved.

Are we now going to make broad-minded, large-hearted Paul revert to the Calvinistic intolerance of Thessalonians and doom all non-Christians to everlasting perdition ? No ! Philippians, Colossians, and Ephesians follow the line of continuity he has made his guide all along. In these, his last words to us, he develops his thoughts in full harmony with what has gone before, and carries his chain of reasoning to its natural and final conclusion. 'All things and all persons are gathered together in Christ, both things which are in heaven and things which are in earth.' Thus does Paul put its fitting coping-stone, 'as a wise master-builder,' to the building he has built on the foundation of Christ, and his building stands four-square, lovely and complete. There could be no other ending to Paul's 'gospel of universal grace,' whose one theme is the infinite Love of God—OUR FATHER.

APPENDIX

ANTINOMIES OF S. PAUL

'ANTINOMY,' a word popularised by Kant, implies self-contradictory statements. The term is specially applied to those self-contradictions into which we are liable to fall whenever we discuss problems transcending the realm of our human experience.

The old question of Free-will is a good illustration of what we mean. It will doubly serve our purpose, for Paul's doctrine of predestination bristles with antinomies.

Is man free to choose his own path, or is he not? If we say: Yes, man is free; then we fly in the face of the supreme sovereignty of a God Who directs us and all things according to His Will and in obedience to His own good and wise Laws. If we answer: No, man is not free; then we seem to contradict our own daily experience, and we also deny man's responsibility for his character and actions. Man ceases to be a moral agent. To put the issue in a nut-shell: Either this world is going exactly as God wills, or it is not. If it is—and our very idea of God's goodness, wisdom and power implies this—then man does not choose his own path. If the world does not go exactly as God wills it, then man, or some power outside God, can frustrate God's eternal plans, and He is not Almighty or All-wise, for His Universe has not followed the lines of His original programme.

Whichever way we answer, we are on the horns of a dilemma. How are we to reconcile these self-contradictory statements, this antinomy? Either conclusion can be backed by equally valid and seemingly flawless arguments; yet, surely, one or the other must be false, for they apparently flatly contradict each other.

Is there no third alternative? May they not possibly both be true? Is there not a higher unity which covers them both? If we are wise and remember our human limitations, our best plan is to suspend our judgment. Everyday experience tells us that we cannot think for five minutes on any metaphysical subject without being brought face to face with a mystery which baffles our utmost power of thought. Our brain cannot fathom the mystery of Free-will, human or divine, because our experience-data are insufficient; we have no solid basis of evidence to build on. We are not in a position either to deny or to assert man's Free-will. None the less, we may *provisionally* admit both as facts, and wait for the day when new light comes and we shall see the larger truth which reconciles both. The denial of either would reduce God's world and the Day of Judgment to a meaningless farce.

S. Paul boldly attacks this big question and unavoidably involves himself in self-contradictions. In one and the same breath he tells us in Rom. ix. that Israel's rejection is purely due to its own fault, and yet that it is not its own fault at all. Similarly, at one moment he bids us 'work out our own salvation,' yet he assures us that we cannot help ourselves, for we are 'as clay in the hand of the potter.'

We do not blame Paul. The mystery is humanly insoluble. Two solutions are possible: God predestinates; man is free. He suggests both, himself leans strongly to the former, and leaves the question open.

But there are other antinomies of S. Paul which are the outcome, not of human limitations, but of loose thinking, and we can account for these in two ways. Paul labours under two great disadvantages: (*a*) He is a pioneer breaking virgin-soil; (*b*) he is a Pharisee as well as a Christian.

(*a*) We must remember that Paul is the Father of Christian Theology. We have seen that he is a profound, original, independent thinker, a man of vision clear and keen, a close and logical reasoner, an intellectual and spiritual genius. But, for all his ability, Paul was not infallible or superhuman. The field was too wide for any one man to cover, and even good Homer sometimes nods. From the outset Paul firmly grasped the fundamental principles of Christianity, determined their bearing, and fearlessly followed their lead. But all

along the line his theology was still in a fluid state of development, 'in the making,' and it is not surprising if, on some points, Paul does not attain finality or drive his principles home to their logical conclusions. The Founder of Christian theology does not say the last word on all its problems, any more than Darwin on Evolution. The astonishing greatness of S. Paul is that, coming when and where and whence he did, he achieved so much in the way of a really scientific theology which successfully stands the severest tests we can apply to it to-day.

(*b*) Paul was also handicapped in another way. For thirty years a Pharisee, he was never able to shake himself entirely free from the influences and preconceptions of his early Rabbinic training. True, the great Christian principles upon which his life and Faith were based stood out clear before his mind and gave form and direction to his thoughts, words, and actions. But there were other principles also subconsciously at work in Paul the Pharisee-Christian. His theology, like the man himself, is a blend of Christianity and Judaism. Can we wonder if here and there his Jewish creed shows through his Christian teaching? Paul very rarely, the Twelve habitually, tried to pour the new wine of Christianity into the old bottles of Judaism, and spoiled both, souring the wine and bursting the bottles. By far the greater portion of Paul's antinomies are due to this attempt to wed two irreconcilable principles.

This foreign Jewish element in Paul's Christian teaching comes out clearly in his views on the saving efficacy of the Death of our Lord.

Jewish theology, as we have seen, lays great stress on vicarious suffering. According to the Rabbis, the unmerited sufferings, and especially the martyrdom, of exceptionally righteous men were regarded as an atonement and substitution for the sins of others. Paul had imbibed this teaching and never lost it. He undoubtedly regards the Death of Christ as a substitution and atonement for our sins. God's Law has been wilfully broken by man. Man is justly condemned to death. Christ steps in and bears the penalty of death in man's stead. God's justice is fully satisfied, and man leaves God's court of justice acquitted and without a stain.

Clearly this is the old bottle of Jewish vicarious suffering. But Paul does not stop there. Now he gives us the new wine of Christianity. Looking into his own heart, he finds as a fact of his inward religious experience that the Death of Christ has had a wondrous *moral* effect on his own life. He is an entirely changed man. He knows that he himself has died unto sin and risen again unto newness of life. The *physical* Death and Resurrection of Jesus have somehow brought about Paul's *moral* death unto sin and resurrection to newness of life.

How has this strange miracle happened? Paul the Christian now speaks, and his answer is quite different from that of Paul the Pharisee-Christian. '*The love of Christ constraineth us.*' Christ's great love for Paul, a love that stooped even to the Cross for his sake, has won Paul's heart, evoked in him a responsive love for Christ, a love so deep and tender that it has transfigured his whole character. He is now 'dead unto sin' and 'risen again to newness of life,' because Christ's love for him and his own love for Christ compel him to be Christ-like.

But this was not Paul's starting-point. He is now introducing a totally different principle from his original principle of Christ our substitute with which he began. He has passed from the physical objective Death of Christ as our mere scape-goat to the larger idea of the moral subjective efficacy of the Death. It is no longer the mere shedding of Christ's Blood that saves us, it is the feeling of love called forth in our own heart at the sight of His great love for us.

Yet, even though he holds the true clue in his hand, Paul the Jew cannot shake himself free of his Rabbinic creed of vicarious suffering. He is still possessed by the idea of a Christ Who is our Substitute, takes our place on the Cross and dies in our stead. Somehow, he cannot tell how, the Bloody Death of Jesus *is* our 'ransom.'

How is Paul to reconcile these two antinomies (*a*) The Death of Christ in itself saves us; (*b*) 'The love of Christ constraining us' saves us? Here are two mutually inconsistent principles, which are irreconcilable, yet he places them side by side with little or no attempt at harmonising them. The inconsistency would not strike Rabbinic Paul as it jars on us Christians now. He is in the transition stage

between Judaism and Christianity and still feels something of the constraining power of both. As ever happens when the new wine within us is ready to burst its old bottle, he instinctively feels that something is wrong somewhere, he knows not what; yet this lurking sub-conscious doubt makes him cling to the old creed all the more. Under various disguises Paul neutralises his profession of his old 'vicarious' beliefs, yet he justifies it to himself on reasonable grounds. He bridges the impassable gulf between the physically objective and morally subjective aspects of the Death by his conception of a mystical union with Christ.

It was commonly believed by all Jews that, in the Messianic age, Messiah's Spirit would be abundantly poured into the hearts of the faithful. His Spirit of perfect holiness and power would be ours. Paul more than shared this belief. In his eyes, Christ's Spirit so works on our spirit that our own spirit is transfused into His, and we and He are one. 'I live! yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.' To Paul, this oneness of the believer with Christ is no mere figure of speech. It is a real, actual, positive fact.

Now, Paul's solution of his difficulty is easy. The physical Death of Christ on the Cross is not merely vicarious after all. Christ and the Christian, the Man from heaven and man, are one. When Christ died on the Cross, we actually died there too in and with Him. When He rose from the grave, so did we. Even now and here on earth, we have ascended with Him and are sitting at the right hand of God. All that Christ does and is, I do and am. Christ's Death on the Cross, then, is both vicarious yet not vicarious, but our very own. This is why its moral virtue is ours.

It is a magnificent conception, and, with his Jewish convictions still strong upon him, no other course lay open to Paul. It was his only way of reconciling his old traditional creed with his new principles, which had advanced far beyond it, though he saw it not. None the less, we cannot close our eyes to the fact that Paul's view of the Atonement presents a glaring antinomy. The old bottles of Judaism will not hold the new wine of Christianity.

What of ourselves? Paul the Jew, still steeped in Judaism and groping his way to the light, gives us the right as well as the wrong clue to the efficacy of the Atonement. Yet it is

precisely the inconsistent part of his solution that Christian Theology ever since has seized upon and perpetuated to the exclusion of the true answer: 'The Love of Christ constraineth us,' also given us by Paul.

As Matthew Arnold remarks in another connection: 'It is as if Newton had introduced into his exposition of the Law of Gravitation an incidental remark, erroneous, about light and colours; and we were to make the remark the head and front of Newton's Law and ignore the Law itself.' Paul's (and the Twelve's) Rabbinic teaching:—'Our moral sin has been done away with by a putting the Body of Jesus to a Bloody Death,' has held the field for nineteen hundred years. Paul's Christian teaching:—'The Love of Christ Who died for me constrains me, so that it is now a moral impossibility for me to continue in sin,' has been all but ignored. Only now is the conscience and moral sense of mankind beginning to revolt against the repelling Jewish element in the old creed and restoring Paul's true solution to its right place. Here, again, 'the reign of the true Paul is only just beginning.'

Another antinomy in Paul's theology stands out in his view of the Resurrection of the dead. We need not repeat here what we have so fully discussed in our last chapter (xxiv.). We have seen that Paul began with a firm belief in the resurrection of the body of this flesh. In his later epistles, on the other hand, he assures us that, at death, we entirely cast off our fleshly body. The spirit now becomes all in all. It is clothed in a new spirit-body of its own, a body of heavenly-light substance, holy and immortal, and thus adapted to our heavenly and purely spiritual life (2 Cor. v.).

Here again, Paul's antinomy is the outcome of two antagonistic forces in him, each struggling for the mastery. Paul the Jew clamours for a resurrection of the body; Paul the Christian will have none of it. To a Jew the body was an essential part of himself. If he was to rise from the dead, his body must rise with him. Paul the Christian, with his conviction of the 'spirit' as man's true self, could not stop at this material Jewish idea of a resurrection of the body. But the Jew in Paul is still very strong. It took him many a year after his conversion before he could enunciate the great truth, so clearly set forth in 2 Cor. v., that there is and can be no resurrection of the flesh. There he altogether discards his

old Jewish article of Faith:—'I believe in the Resurrection of the body.' He looks confidently forward to a purely spiritual body, 'a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' Here again, Christian Theology lags behind Paul. It ignores his riper and Christian solution, while it perpetuates his earlier crude Jewish creed, which he has discarded.

We have dwelt at considerable length on three of Paul's antinomies. We could easily quote many more, but we must content ourselves with a bare reference to a few others.

In his teaching on the Law, Paul involves himself in hopeless antinomies. He assures us that the Law is the 'holy, just and good' Will and Word of God. Yet, while professing to adhere to the letter of Scripture, he overrides it (and history) wholesale, often in a way that is purely arbitrary.

In dealing with 'the Flesh,' he unconsciously gives the flesh a moral and sinful tint which implies that it was bad even before the Fall (cf. 1 Cor. xv. 45-47). He halts between two opinions: (*a*) The flesh is not essentially sinful; (*b*) it is.

Paul's Christology (*e.g.* his teaching on the Incarnation, Pre-existence and Divinity of our Lord,—true as it is,) and his Eschatology (*e.g.* his inconsistent statements on the Second Coming and the salvation of few or all,) also present several unsolved antinomies. Indeed, they abound in Paul.

As already hinted, Paul, the Founder of Christian Theology, never fully completed his system. He never attained finality, though he was always working towards it. His ideas were still, on many points, in a state of development. As a Christian he began, at his conversion, just where he left off as a Pharisee. The vision of the Risen Christ poured a flood of new light on all his problems. In the light of his new revelation, with its great fundamental principles, he parted gradually from one Jewish conception after another. He entered upon a long process of self-evolution in the course of which most of these heterogeneous elements were dropped silently or avowedly one by one.

We are apt to overlook this long process of development. We forget how slow it must have been, and how imperfect to the end. No wonder we overlook it. The fourteen years after Paul's conversion—the most formative years of his life—are a complete blank to us. Acts conceals this gap, or knows nothing of it. Indeed, Acts ix. leads us to infer that,

within a week of his conversion, Paul was preaching his gospel in its entirety to the Jews of Damascus—a moral impossibility. Paul himself tells us in his letters that it took him years to think out and crystallise his views.

Even after these fourteen years, his theology was still 'in the making.' His Epistles only cover the last ten years of his life. Here alone are we on absolutely sure ground, for we have Paul's own statements. Yet, even in these last ten years of his life, we can trace three or four stages in the development of his views.

Even in the last of these stages, Paul has not attained complete finality, though, in all cases, we can clearly trace the lines along which he is working towards it. Surely, then, it is not only permissible, but our bounden duty, to develop his thoughts, wherever necessary, along these clearly marked lines. He himself would have us make his system symmetrically complete by pressing home his own principles and carrying his own chain of reasoning to its logical conclusion.

[*Note.*—On p. 102, we promised an Appendix Note on Paul's solution of the world-problem, or the cosmic significance of Christ: 'The Universe is one whole, and Christ is the meaning of it.' We now find that we have anticipated most of what we had reserved for this note in the text (*e.g.* p. 332 and p. 219, etc.), and it is, therefore, unnecessary to repeat it here.—J. R. C.]

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